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ALGERNON SIDNEY

"If you stake your life on any desperate attempt to make things a little better, people always imagine it was your own choice,—you liked doing it. They don't ask what it was that made you give up the pleasantness; if you get credit for anything, it is only credit for a morbid taste for being wretched."—GEORGE FLEMING.

"To this military attitude of the soul we give the name of Heroism. . . . There is somewhat not philosophical in heroism; there is somewhat not holy in it; it seems not to know that other souls are of one texture with it; it has pride; it is the extreme of individual nature. . . . Nevertheless we must profoundly revere it. . . . Heroism works in contradiction to the voice of mankind, and in contradiction, for a time, to the voice of the great and good. . . . But it finds its own success at last, and then the prudent also extol."—EMERSON.

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ALGERNON SIDNEY

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A REVIEW

BY
GERTRUDE M. IRELAND BLACKBURNE

1611
3560

LONDON
KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH & CO., 1, PATERNOSTER SQUARE
1885

TO

MY MOTHER

THIS LITTLE WORK

IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED.

PREFACE.

It is with much diffidence that I venture to give this result of some careful study to the public. I can claim so little for my work; it is only an attempt to sketch truly and impartially the figure of a noble character from materials which are accessible to every scholar. Yet, since people are turning again to seventeenth-century theories —and the desire to penetrate into human life is always fresh—perhaps such a study may not be without interest for the general reader.

The "Life of Algernon Sydney," by Dr. Meadley, will always be the standard work on this subject, and I have to express, once for all, my obligations to that and to Hollis's splendid quarto (new edition), 1772, of the Works of Algernon Sidney, with a somewhat inaccurate but enthusiastic memoir. I have very carefully tried to piece together scattered facts and conflicting statements found in many short biographies and most histories. I have had great difficulty in deciding upon my "background," and have felt often that, though the subject ought to require no apology, its treatment by a young writer may

make one necessary. Yet I have tried by sympathy and study to place myself mentally at Sidney's side, and noticing briefly what most affected him, have added perhaps some new thoughts as to his character and aims. Where I have differed from or supplemented good authorities, I have given my reasons in the text, but have not thought it necessary to burden a small work like this by giving continual references to those consulted.

Whenever possible, I have told the story in the words of Algernon Sidney himself, and very much regret that it was not possible to do so oftener. There are gaps in his life which probably cannot be filled up. I leave this work, hoping that it may do—fearing that it has not done—justice to the great man whose name, as I have said elsewhere, has become a proverb, whilst the hopes of his life have been utterly ignored.

G. M. I. B.

Roodee Lodge,
October, 1884.

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ALGERNON SIDNEY.

CHAPTER I.

YOUTH. 1622—1643. ÆTAT. 22.

"For God and my standard!"
"But for which standard?"—*Scott.*

THE life of Algernon Sidney has in it every essential for making an interesting biographical study, but one. He lived through most critical times. He was an actor in events which affected the whole of Europe. He was a keen and shrewd observer of men and characters. He was a student and an author. He had a remarkable individuality. His friends and his enemies—he had most of the latter—alike bear witness to the power he exercised over the minds of all with whom he was brought into contact. There is, however, always something strange in the way they speak of him. The affection of his friends is but loving admiration; the opposition of his enemies is always admiring fear. He is a noble-minded, hard-working patriot, and a pure-souled and thoroughly honourable man of the world. He died under an unjust sentence, at perhaps the

darkest period of our English history; but what gives him a claim on our interest and sympathy to a far greater extent is the fact of his suffering injustice throughout an almost blameless life.

We observed that there was every essential to biography but one: that is, the absence of materials during certain portions of his life. Nearly all that can be said of him has been already given to the world; but it is not now generally accessible. What we aim at, is to collect from various authors—both from those who were contemporary and those who wrote during the times immediately preceding and following the French Revolution—such a story as may perhaps please those who care to read of a well-marked character who lived in a critical period. It is the human interest of Algernon Sidney's character which most attracts us. We must see the background of the age in which he lived, the circumstances which he hoped to mould, the inferior men who succeeded where he failed, the atmosphere of politics and morality which he detested, and protested against; yet it is no longer necessary for a biographer to re-argue every question, which has practically been settled by time. It is sufficient to place ourselves in sympathy with the man we would depict, to know him and his hopes and fears, "to feel the struggles after the higher right touch an answering chord in our own hearts," to look upon the historical action as not only directly affecting ourselves to this day, but as bringing us that belief in the goodness of human nature and faith in the power of time, which is as much needed as ever.

Is not that what we learn from a tragedy?

The life of Algernon Sidney is a tragedy. It may be called the tragedy of misunderstanding. We know how the master dramatists indicate in their early scenes by character actions the course that the dark fifth act shall take. Jealousy is displayed in trifles, anger sweeps aside small hindrances, ambition gains early victories; so here, misappreciation and misunderstanding darkened the life in domestic matters as in politics, long before the end came. This tragedy was scarcely, however, a "purification by suffering." It rather exhibited the endurance implanted in that great mind than called it forth. Ingratitude and disappointment in men make cynics, if "affliction makes a saint." Sidney has been the "spirit-friend" of many a "noble kinsman"—that he was not more enthusiastically beloved in his own day, must be attributed in part to the action and re-action of unrecognised superiority. The sensitive and proud man, in advance of his neighbours, hides his ideals and feelings under a moral veil. He has probably no other claim to their interest. He conceals what makes him better worth knowing than they are: out of pride, because they, not perceiving it, are not worthy to see it, and from humility, because he looks upon himself as so inferior to his aim and work. But he knows, too, that he will meet with his recognition in due time from those who can appreciate it. He is the last to complain of honour being hard to win. His neighbours have much more real right to object to his holding himself aloof from them, to his supposing they

cannot appreciate him; at least, so it seems. However, whatever be the cause, there is a sheet of glass between some men and their fellows. They are indeed seen by, but never come into contact with, each other. And yet there is not misanthropy on one side, nor want of feeling on the other.

Of all men, by birth and temperament, Algernon Sidney seemed most unlikely to become a self-sufficing student. He was, as he says himself, "of the wood of which peers are made," being the second son of Robert Sidney, afterwards the second Earl of Leicester, and of Dorothy, eldest daughter of Henry Percy, Earl of Northumberland. His father was a man of much ability, and seems to have taken a special pride in his son's childish talents. Every authority speaks of the careful education of Algernon. It was, however, no teaching for a mere student. Twice in his later letters he speaks of his defective learning, not altogether with the humility of a scholar, but as a mere matter of indisputable fact. "When they could not find fault with the matter," he writes, as a State Commissioner, "they took exceptions at it for being false Latin, which is probably true, for our two secretaries being absent, I wrote it, having never in my life written so much as three lines in that language." (Of course this might mean composition only, but that was part of a classical education then.) And, again, he says, his wish to converse with those he travelled with "forced me to make use of French and Latin, whereby I have recovered something of what I had forgotten of the one and learnt a little more

than I knew of the other." Nor did he read very much in his youthful days. His education, even at that early age, came from men not from books. He was destined to be a public man. It was shortly before that time that sons of peers began to seek to enter the House of Commons. Lord Leicester had attended there himself during three parliaments. He desired nothing better for his son than that he should work for his country, or that his country should be served by those who knew what patriotism meant. In 1632 the Earl was appointed Danish Ambassador, and took his two sons, Philip and Algernon, with him to Gluckstadt to join Christian IV. at Rensberg. This three months' tour was the first occasion on which Sidney left England, and child in age as he was, he was already observant enough to profit by it. In 1636, as a boy of fourteen, his father again took him with him—this time to Paris. Here he became a great favourite.

"He hath a huge deal of wit and much sweetness of nature," is the description of one "who spake well of very few." Lively, intelligent, and thoroughly trustworthy, he won his father's heart. All seemed in his favour, though the times were very difficult. England was, on the whole, prosperous and contented, but graver minds thought that she ought not to be so. Besides the unconstitutional procedure in home affairs, when Charles I. was governing personally, she was not taking the place she ought to have done in the struggles on the Continent: so many believed, rightly or wrongly. Young Sidney, at the Court of Louis XIII., gained

some insight into the complications of European politics. He knew of the difficulties which met England at every turn. She had secured her own independence. But some of her people thought that "in God's war, slackness is infancy," though others, "like the Court poet Carew, would speak of the happiness of England in being on an island, living to herself and undisturbed by other people's quarrels." A few years later England was "dreeing her ain weird" in the island itself, while the Thirty Years' War was moving on without her assistance.

After leaving Paris young Algernon was sent for some time to Rome, and then returned to Penshurst.

Evelyn, writing in 1652, says of this place: "We went to see Penshurst, the Earl of Leicester's, famous once for its gardens and excellent fruit, and for the noble conversation which was wont to meet there, celebrated by that illustrious person Sir Philip Sidney, who had there composed divers of his pieces. It stands in a park, is finely watered, and was now full of company on the marriage of my old fellow collegiate, Mr. Robert Smith, who married my lady Dorothy Sidney, widow of the Earl of Sunderland." It was in 1639 that Lord Leicester returned from Paris for the first marriage of Dorothy. Waller, immediately after the death of his wife, had addressed many fervid lines to her as "Saccharissa." But Penshurst Place had nobler poetic associations than with that clever versifier, who looked out for his own interest during all the years of his long life. Many people came then to Penshurst, and there were

the memories of noble men and women for several generations.

> Are days of old familiar to thy mind,
> O reader? Hast thou let the midnight hour
> Pass unperceived, whilst thou in fancy lived
> With high-born beauties and enamoured chiefs,
> Sharing their hopes, and with a breathless joy,
> Whose expectation touched the verge of pain,
> Following their dangerous fortunes?
> If such love
> Hath ever thrilled thy bosom, thou wilt tread,
> As with a pilgrim's reverential thoughts,
> The groves of Penshurst.

So speaks Southey. If we may use a commonplace of biographers, the memories of Sir Philip Sidney and of his sister, afterwards the Countess of Pembroke, must have been sufficient to inspire the youth (who inherited all the good qualities of his house) with a desire to go and do likewise. His mind was intensely receptive: the traditions of his family, the atmosphere of his home, and the natural bias of his disposition, were all in his favour.

All lay in sunshine for him, though shadows were falling on England. "He seemed to me scarce other than my own ideal knight." Perhaps in 1639 he was one of the most promising young men in England, and apparently a secure future was before him.

The first check was a very slight one. Lord Northumberland, his uncle, endeavoured to obtain a commission for him in a troop of horse in the service of the United Provinces. Except Charles I., the King,

whose sister had married the Prince of Orange, every one then liked the Dutch, for they belonged to the "Protestant" party. Scott makes Dugald Dalgetty complain of their service, but it may be imagined that the reasons which render it wearisome to that old soldier were not such as would prevent guardians encouraging their wards to prefer it. The Prince of Orange gave away the troop to some one else, and again in 1640 the same request was refused, though backed up by the influence of the King. Algernon Sidney was not to fight on foreign soil.

English troubles had already begun. The Long Parliament met in 1640. With the political bearing of events we are not concerned; only, be it remembered that, for right or wrong, the opposition to the Crown was almost entirely aristocratic at first. The "gentry" in England were, of course, synonymous with "nobles" in other countries. But the Peers also took part in the struggle. Looking back, of course, the matter is clear enough, so far as facts are concerned; to stand by Lord Leicester's side in imagination, in 1640, means that penetration is at fault and prophecy is hopelessly baffled. Never were honourable men more perplexed what to do.

Lord Leicester had his personal annoyances connected with State troubles. He was appointed to succeed Wentworth, afterwards Earl Strafford, in the governorship of Ireland. Now, Wentworth had been, in vulgar phrase, a man who would "stand no nonsense." Most unbiassed people concur in believing that his government of Ireland was successful, setting

aside all his motives for it; but he had, unfortunately, some ideas of even-handed, not Irish, justice. He could make no allowances for great men who wished to escape scot free, however many murders they committed. He refused to believe in the good to be wrought by the most corrupt Parliament that ever met on College Green. He used its name because it was useful, but treated it simply as a cat's-paw. As regards Ireland, he was, to the common people, a benevolent tyrant. But Ireland was too near England for disciplinary measures to be safe. Strafford's ideal failed, and when recalled to England, he found himself without friends, and with many enemies. On his death, the choice of Lord Leicester as Lord Lieutenant seemed to be approved of by every one. He was moderate and able. As a practised diplomatist he would keep down the intrigues of the Roman Catholic party with the House of Austria, and there was no fear of his allowing Ireland to become the nursery garden of the King's power. This reflection seems to have suggested itself to Charles I., and accounts for Clarendon's remarks. Lord Leicester could not obtain permission to go to Ireland, though the "Great Rebellion" had broken out there. He was kept dancing about the Court, put off on one pretence and another, whilst awful carnage was going on in the land he was nominally responsible for. No attention was paid to his own requests or to his petition of Parliament.

He was, however, able to appoint his eldest son, Lord de Lisle, to his own regiment of horse, in which

Algernon had also obtained a troop. Meadley quotes a MS. letter from Sir John Temple (father of Sir William Temple, the famous diplomatist, and always Sidney's true friend): "Dublin, Jan. 14, 1622. My Lord Lisle and his brother are both well, and I shall serve them to the utmost of my life and fortune; they both deserve very well of the public here." Of the public, but not of the Court party. Lord Lisle found that it was no simple question of putting down rebellion. The Court had been reluctant to undertake any measures for suppressing the insurgents, and the same reasons which led to their father's suspension from his office, caused the brilliant services of the brothers to be regarded with disfavour. Algernon Sidney, however, had shown that he was no mere dreamer and enthusiast. His courage was as great as his intelligence. He was watching English events with intense interest; but, as yet, in spite of their wrongs and personal grievances, the Sidneys appear to have had no intention of deserting the Crown. No one else had. Essex himself always thought that whatever happened, the King would still be King. It was in the minds of many of the aristocratic beginners of the strife simply a question as to whether the King was politically in his right mind. They had no wish to do more than to gently restrain him for his own good. The course of after events showed that such moderate wishes were impracticable. Duplicity and obstinacy on one side, and first fanaticism and then lawlessness on the other, soon made it appear that the strife was one from which reason early departed.

The royal standard was hoisted at Nottingham in 1642. Lord Leicester was deprived of his government in November, 1643, a year after war had begun. Thoroughly disgusted, but still loyal to a master who had assigned "neither reason nor recompense" for his treatment of the popular Lord Lieutenant—popular perhaps, because he had never ruled—Lord Leicester waited with anxiety at Penshurst for news of his two sons. Algernon was evidently his favourite. Perhaps this was because he was ardent and full of youthful hopes. His father, who seems to have resigned the world for himself from this time, unwilling to take part against the King, and feeling that it was impossible to serve a man who personally slighted him, left the two younger men perfectly free to do as they liked.

Sidney was now one-and-twenty; no doubt old for his age. He had seen many aspects of life and had risked his own. He returned with his brother from Ireland to Chester, August, 1643, where, says Meadley, "some of their horses being taken possession of by the Royalists, in violation of their father's license, they again put out to sea." It may be remembered that Chester was then almost the chief port for Ireland. Only six years before, Milton had mourned for "Lycidas," who was drowned going thence to Dublin. Throughout the war, Chester was a point which either party endeavoured to seize and hold. Leaving this port, and "landing afterwards at Liverpool, they were detained with their arms and other property by the commissioners

stationed in that quarter by the Parliament, till further orders concerning them should be received." Lord de Lisle, indeed, was immediately set at liberty, though soon afterwards he was placed under a partial restraint, in consequence of a letter being discovered, written by Sidney and addressed to Orlando Bridgeman, a Royalist,* at Chester, desiring to have his horses restored, as he intended shortly after to set out for Oxford, "where his father could well testify his affection to the service of the King. Information of this discovery being transmitted to the Parliament, the two brothers, in consequence of fresh instructions, were sent up to London." The King was always of opinion that Sidney had arranged this. It was not so, as far as we may judge from the indications we have of his views; for the first thing we have to be sure of is that Sidney was not then a republican, as he has been so often styled. He has, as he tells us, absolutely nothing to say against the triplex form of government; against monarchy no nation is secure of its liberties unless it be under King, Lords, and Commons—monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy must be represented. He was a young man with many theories. Judge Jefferies, long after, when the evening shadows were falling round Algernon Sidney, alluded to the "luxuriant talk" which the patriot delighted in. But his Republic was:

> A fair fantastic Commonwealth, too fair for earth,
> In which the wise alone bore rule.

* The Bishop's son, afterwards Chief Justice.

If we look upon Sidney as a typical cultivated man of our own time, who, by some mischance found himself put back into the seventeenth century, we shall have as vivid an idea as we can get of him. It is, generally speaking, an anachronism to imagine statesmen of the past as holding the same tenets as those prevalent in a later age. In this case Sidney was, as it were, merely an anachronism. He was a man of the nineteenth century; he was out of sympathy with almost every opinion held by those around him. He could not bear indifference, yet, persecuting enthusiasm seemed to him, as to us, really "bad taste." He was deeply religious, but, considering "religion to be a divine philosophy in the mind," he disliked the Presbyterian tyranny as much as Milton did, and objected to the public prayer-meetings of the Independents nearly as truly as he did to the principles of absolute monarchy. We must at once dismiss from our minds all preconceived notions as to a young Roundhead joining a desperate throng of men who wished to overturn the whole machinery of the British Constitution. Sidney even wore his hair as long as any of the Cavaliers who rallied round the King! His views on the position of affairs resembled that of the best men in the nation at that time. He says, later on in his life, that "the government of England was not ill constituted, the defects more lately observed proceeding from the change of manners and corruption of the times. . . . Our law is so ambiguous, perplexed, and intricate, that it is hard to know when it is broken. In all the public contests we have had, men of good

judgment and of integrity have followed both parties. The nation has been brought to fight against those they had made to be what they were, upon the unequal terms of hazarding all against nothing. If they had success they gained no more than what was their own before, and which the law ought to have secured; whereas it is evident, that if at any one time the contrary had happened, the nation had been utterly enslaved."

But, so far, Sidney was young, and (though, for that matter, all the more prolific in theories, and feeling with greater intensity the unhappy state of his country and the darkness of the prospect), he does not appear to have decided with which party he should take up arms. His services in Ireland were to the interest of any ruling power. To the end of 1643 it was by no means a clear matter that it was liberty against despotism. The choice was plain for Milton, with his religious enthusiasm. For Sidney it was not so. He might have found himself in the wrong camp afterwards; but he came home from Ireland intending apparently to present himself before the King, who had treated his father with such neglect and evasion, whose intrigues in Ireland were beyond the power of two young men to fathom, but who was the representative, *ex officio*, of the Crown and of the Church. The father had served their King as they supposed; yet the disfavour of the Court party was only the prelude to the openly-spoken suspicion of royalty.

The King himself, to use a modern metaphor, "put down the points." Philip, Lord Lisle, and his younger

brother, once in the hands of those with whom they had sympathy, glided on to the lines which led to the opposition army. The process is very familiar, and calls for no apologies. The younger generation suddenly realise their own theories must colour their practice; they must act, and they must have something real if they are genuine. As soon as they begin to think and work for themselves they cast off the traditions of their family. They either adopt them again as their own principles, or, as in this case, recognise their preference of some others which may more nearly approach their ideas of the needs of the age, that is, of themselves.

Thus it was with the Sidneys. Lord Leicester himself was practically neutral. His sons joined those who, so far, were known as Parliamentarians. The brothers had come from Ireland, where a much more terrible strife had been going on. This English warfare, conducted as yet under authorities clothed with the gravity of well-born, thoughtful men, who would only act on the defensive, and were governed by politic considerations, must have struck the new recruits as much as it did the men who were willing "to shoot the King as readily as any other man." Yet, however moderate the opinions of those like Essex, Hampden, Hyde, Falkland, Northumberland, Colepepper, etc., on either side might be, war was war. As Cromwell rightly perceived, those half measures would satisfy no one. Blood was not to be shed for nothing. The judicious peacemaker is the man who is most in the right during a quarrel; but his truths fall unheeded on the ears of those who are fighting,

not so much because they have cause to do so, as because they are antipathetic.

The Sidneys had already lost a brother-in-law in the fight. The Earl of Sunderland—the age of Algernon—was killed in the first battle of Newbury, fighting on the King's side. Waller, whose poems had made no impression on Lady Sunderland before her marriage, was one of those now working to make peace. It was hopeless. Whatever had been the causes of the war, there could be no peace. "The only safe blows for men and parties are those which are too heavy to be revenged," was the principle on which England would henceforth fight.

CHAPTER II.

THE CAUSE OF THE COMMONWEALTH. 1644—1653.

ÆTAT. 22—31.

We can only have the highest happiness, such as goes along with being a great man, by having wide thoughts, and much feeling for the rest of the world as well as for ourselves; and this sort of happiness often brings so much pain with it, that we can only tell it from pain by its being what we would choose before everything else, because our souls see it is good.—*George Eliot.*

No part of English history is much better known than that of the Civil Wars; so we need not dwell upon it here. Only we must recall the state of things when Algernon Sidney accepted the command of a troop in the Eastern Counties' Association, in May, 1644. Up to the time that association had been organised, the year previously, there had been very little enthusiasm on the Puritan side; Englishmen were most unwilling to proceed to extremities. Negotiations went on, and were broken off, perpetually, all the preceding winter of 1643–4. Sidney's uncle, Lord Northumberland, was one of the parliamentary commissioners who had waited on the King. In the pages of Clarendon we read his word portraits of Sidney's nearest relatives on either side; but we have to take his characters of men and

their opinions with a little allowance for the colouring of his own mind. He is particularly careful to say that good men are easily led astray, whenever they differ from himself, and cannot be otherwise excepted against —and also—which is probably true—that no one quite knew what he was then doing. However, this stage of doubt was soon to come to an end. The men who wished for parliamentary supremacy to be established were falling back, and Hampden was killed. In July, 1644, Sidney, who had received £400 from the Parliament "in payment of arrears, and to enable him to provide himself with such things as were necessary for the service," charged at the head of his troops at the battle of Marston Moor. This conflict was a very decisive event.

It was the beginning of a new state of things for both sides. The opposition cavalry, who had hitherto only acted as mounted infantry, met that under Prince Rupert, which had never known defeat. It was accustomed to "charge straight home" in the manner their dashing commander had learnt in, and introduced from, the wars of Germany. On Marston Moor the best troops in both armies may be said to have been opposed to each other; and "a most disastrous defeat for the Parliament was only turned into as great a victory by the splendid behavior of the Associated Counties Horse." Among them rode Algernon Sidney. His courage seems to have been conspicuous even there, where, unlike the other portions of the opposition array, there was no wavering. The *Parliamentary Chronicle* says

that he "charged with much gallantry at the head of my Lord of Manchester's regiment of horse, and came off with much honour, though with many wounds, the true badges of his honour; and was sent away afterwards to London for cure of his wounds." These "scars of honour," as another authority calls them, were not, after all, apparently dangerous; but on the field the struggle was desperate, and had it not been for a brave soldier who rescued him, and refused afterwards to give his name, Colonel Sidney's valour would not have been of use to his party again.

Parliament was rapidly proving how unfit it was to have the regulation of an army, and the King that he could not be trusted. When the Uxbridge negotiations failed a new stage of the conflict began. The "self-denying ordinance," whereby officers of the army were excluded from the House—except the independent leaders, who managed to renew their commissions from time to time—at length passed the Commons, after much hesitation and recrimination between the parties represented by Lord Manchester and Cromwell; the personal quarrel between the two, the new modelling of the army, and the events of the winter of 1645, belong to general history. Sidney served then under Cromwell. "He had left the old constitutional party," simply because it had proved its incapacity for the work before it; it was taken up and swept away. The Presbyterian tyranny would have been no gain to the cause of liberty. Already Milton had written the "Areopagitica" (Nov., 1644), and already many a protest was beginning to

be made against the Presbyterians, both as regarded religion and politics. This was another critical time in the war: the King's prospects were higher than they had been, the new model army had yet to be tried.

Algernon Sidney threw his whole heart into "the Cause." He was appointed Governor of Chichester in May, 1645, and in December was chosen as burgess for the town of Cardiff. Irish affairs were more confused than ever, and the King's intrigues with the insurgents —though perfectly natural from his point of view—on being discovered in his papers captured, and deciphered by the opposition, after Naseby (1645), added the last occasion of anger.

Parliament did not trust Lord Inchiquin; and, though with the usual indecisiveness which naturally characterised every action in those times, when nothing was clear except to bigots, Lord de Lisle was appointed for a year to be Governor of Ireland and to watch him. Like his father, Lord de Lisle was not allowed to go over to his Government till every one was satisfied. As no one seemed likely to be, it was not till February 16, 1647, that he was able to leave England. When he did get to Ireland, after nearly a year's delay, he and Lord Inchiquin entered upon a course of rivalry, in which he did not come off as victor. On Monday, 22nd February, 1647, he landed at Cork, "where they found the Government and all things in strange disorder, and the abuses very great." Algernon was with him, for Lord de Lisle had appointed his brother to the command of his former regiment in the A.C.H., then ordered to

Ireland, but, not sent thither by the committee at Derby House; he was made Lieutenant-General of the Horse, and Governor of Dublin. "£2,000 were voted to him, January 4, 1647, in payment of his arrears."

The two brothers fell together. Lord Inchiquin was too much for Philip; Lord de Lisle, after two months' striving for political mastery, had to retire. Algernon Sidney, who by this time was in favour of, and in favour with, the Independents as a party, was also recalled. The one thing we learn from the curious mixture of parties, and the inextricable confusion of opinions and events, is that Sidney was opposed, on account of his connections, and valued, for himself. Even on the 8th April, 1647, when a hostile vote was carried against him in the absence of his friends in the Commons, assent was given to some recompense for him; and when the two Sidneys returned to town they both received the thanks of the House. Algernon was made Governor of Dover in October, 1648.

He was now six-and-twenty—young, as we count public men now; but, in those times, it was not an exceptional age at which he might have already done good service. The leaders of the Commonwealth Cause were nearly all under forty, most of them were nearer thirty, or even under that age. Turning over the rolls of names which are familiar to us, we find that Cromwell was the chief exception to this rule.

After the King fell into the hands of the Scotch (May, 1646), the war may be said to have been over. The question, What to do next? was more easily asked

than answered. Future events were, perhaps, as uncertain as anything could be in the history of any State. Looking back from this distance of time, and, much more, from a distance of thought, the three years which elapsed after the war was over, till "the White King passed to his death," seem as nothing; but what are three years of seething political life to those who are engaged in a contest which may bring their country to utter ruin, whilst their own lives and fortunes—less valued by patriots—are also at stake? In intrigue, discontents, revolts, the dogmatism of the Puritans, the restlessness of the Royalists, the steady growth of the Cromwellian party, the development of ideas which should lead to the formation of the Commonwealth, the complications of foreign affairs, the position of unquiet Ireland and difficulties in Scotland, personal affronts to be endured, personal ambitions to be gratified, among all the parties, and all the conflicting rights and wrongs of a state of things which knew no precedent for a nation accustomed to act by precedent, what should any one of those men do whose motto, like Sidney's, in peace and in war, was "Sanctus amor patriæ dat animum"? The patriotic character of English public men is the noblest heritage of their country. The more we read of these times, the more we shall come to the conclusion that there was an astonishingly small amount of self-seeking in the minds of the men who were struggling to get to the front, and a great desire to serve their country in the methods which each supposed best for it. We are much more in sympathy with all the men of the early, than

with any of the second, revolution, so far as political morality is concerned.

Algernon Sidney seems to have been identified with the "Independent" party throughout these years, and to have approved of the demand of the army that the King should be brought before the bar of the nation. Charles had failed in his duty as King. The people who must submit for convenience sake to royalty, in such a case naturally resumed their delegated functions. "Every man is a king till he divest himself of his right, in consideration of something that he thinks better for him," Sidney writes later. The King is for the people, not the people for the King. He thoroughly approved therefore of the principle that Charles I. should be tried by his country, for "the general revolt of a nation is not rebellion." It is then not in the least surprising that, as every one knows, some years afterwards, Algernon Sidney, on being asked if he were guilty of the late King's death, replied indignantly, "Guilty! Do you call that guilt? Why, it was the justest and bravest action that was ever done in England or anywhere else." Just, because it was a punishment, brave, because the offender was mighty. Whatever may be thought of the motives of some of the actors, or of the necessity of the death penalty, there can be no doubt that—to our modern ideas, as to Algernon Sidney's mind—the nation is not bound to passive resistance, but may depose unworthy sovereigns. There is more than cynicism in the words:

> Treason doth never prosper; what's the reason?
> When treason prospers, none doth call it treason!

It is the accepted principle of our English polity, and never is there a better time for proclaiming it than when personal loyalty to the sovereign prevents any fear that stern necessity should compel the people to remember it. "By all laws divine and humane (*sic*), the king is privileged from man's hand," wrote a royalist. In Sir W. Temple's works, the diplomatist speaks of a foreigner who was in this more English than many an Englishman, as he said: "Qu'un Roi d'Angleterre qui veut être l'homme de son peuple est le plus grand roi du monde; mais s'il veut être quelque chose davantage, par Dieu! il n'est pas rien." Such a speech Sidney might have made, whether it was said in the presence of Charles II. or not. But he did not approve of the manner in which the King's trial had been arranged, for he did not think that the nation was represented upon it.

Sidney had taken a great deal of interest in parliamentary affairs, and used his influence always on the side of mercy. The young and afterwards infamous Duke of Buckingham, who was just of age, had taken part in the Surrey rebellion, and then wanted to get back his estate for the second time. It had already been once returned to him. Algernon Sidney was asked to help him. In reply, he writes: "I do not know that the like hath been obtained otherwise than as a matter of favour by those whom the Parliament hath had a desire to gratify, unless my Lord of Buckingham did make his peace; then his debts would be considered in that composition. And if my opinion were of value, I should advise that he would take this time for that work, for

now that *all men are inclined to a peace with the king and his party*, much more gentleness is to be expected than at another time." (October, 1648.)

Lord Leicester had also suffered in the wars, though the devotion of his two sons and of his brother-in-law, Lord Northumberland, might have been taken as binding him to the popular cause. So Sidney writes to his father that he has been speaking about his sequestrated estates, and if any one would think of anything but the King's trial all would be arranged. This is on January 10, 1649. He further says: "I think that if the House of Commons had not been very hasty in turning the ordinance for the king's trial into an act of their own, and contented themselves with their own power, the lords are now in a temper to have given their assent, if they had received a second message from us."

This appears to have been the reason why he did not act as one of the King's judges when the tide turned against the King. We see little enough of him, but what little there is, is always the same. He is of unswerving temper. He does not care what motives may be attributed to him. That he was afraid of the logical consequences of his opinions may be considered absurd. There never was a man who acted more consistently on his own principles from the time they were first adopted. He aimed at the sovereignty of the people—as he then understood it—(the whole people, not the middle class only), and opposed in turn King, Parliament, army, and Protector, as he found them acting contrary to that great theory.

This gives us a clue, then, to his conduct at the King's trial and to the passage in Lord Leicester's journal, January, 1649: "My two sons, Philip and Algernon, came unexpectedly to Penshurst, Monday, 22, and stayed there till Monday, 29; so as neither of them was at the condemnation of the King, nor was Philip, at any time, at the High Court, though a commissioner; but Algernon, a commissioner also, was sometimes in the Painted Chamber, but never in Westminster Hall."

The two brothers were in accord on this matter, and acted also as their father would have wished, though all three were influenced by different considerations. Clarendon says: "The Earl of Leicester was a man of great parts, very conversant in books, and much addicted to the mathematics; and, though he had been a soldier, . . . was in truth rather a speculative than a practical man, and expected a greater certitude in the consideration of business than the business of this world is capable of, which temper proved very inconvenient to him through the course of his life. . . . For he was a man of honour and fidelity to the King, and his greatest misfortunes proceeded from the staggering and irresolution in his nature." He appears to have been soured by his misfortunes, for, throughout the family correspondence, his sons seemed to have tried to please him without success, so far as they were aware. His pride in them is confined to his journals, and his later treatment of Sidney can not be considered just.

But Sidney disappointed him, we suppose, for certainly he was his father's favourite at that time. The

truth might be that he inherited his father's characteristics in some ways, and the natural friction between strong characters of two generations at length produced an estrangement which saddened the younger man's heart and embittered his exile.

Philip, Lord Lisle, identified himself, on the whole, with Cromwell. It may be noted that his name appears on the list of the Council of State, installed on February 17, 1649, and on each succeeding one, except the third and fifth, so long as it lasted. He was always placed on the Committee for Irish Affairs, and in the fifth year, when Algernon was one of the three new members, Philip was one of the Presidents of the Council—a new scheme having been arranged by which the office was only held for twenty-eight days. It is scarcely necessary to add that when Lisle is mentioned as the author of any suggestion, care has to be taken not to confound Viscount Lisle (more correctly de L'Isle), with John Lisle, a very different person.

Algernon returned almost immediately after the King's death (January 30th, 1649) to his parliamentary duties. He and his brother were not the only absentees, and he, at least, could be suspected of no want of public spirit. "He is against strange men that destroy the cause," was the anagram formed by the Hebrew characters of his name, with a little alteration. In these days such a sign worked its own accomplishment. Sidney may or may not have cared for this verbal consecration, but his friends did.

The Cause may be described in the words of a

modern author: "The right to rebellion is the right to seek a higher rule; not to wander in mere lawlessness." There were differences of opinion then, as now, as to what constituted the higher rule. Royalists and Presbyterians held two theories which, by the death of Charles, became united in one, in a return to monarchy under the young Prince; Sidney and many earnest thinkers looked for the Commonwealth being made secure; but Cromwell had other plans.

The first thing, however, was to defend England. Those who had taken the destinies of the nation upon themselves must prepare to meet the world. There is no doubt that there was some admiration mingled with the horror with which foreign countries regarded a nation who dared to put a ruler to death. The public character was thought of as Milton leads us to think of Satan in his first books of "Paradise Lost"—with most respectful and sympathetic condemnation!

But Milton himself had no doubts two years later, and, trumpet-tongued, proclaimed to the world, "The Defence of the People of England," to meet the literary assault of the small, irregularly-printed volume, with its fantastic frontispiece "of quaint emblems and devices, begged from the whole pageantry of some twelfth night's entertainment at Whitehall," which had already had the effect of canonising the "Martyr King." Milton and Sidney differ, as may be expected, in their estimate of the five years of the Commonwealth. But there is no doubt that England's claim to respect did not depend even upon the genius of Milton as her advocate. Words

are listened to when they are well connected with the strength that lies behind them. That strength depended on the personality of one man, Cromwell, who rose from victory to victory, becoming the conqueror of Ireland, the victor of Dunbar and of Worcester, the subduer of the disaffected regiments, and the man who forced the country into recognising the strength of character which marks a ruler. The panegyrics of Waller may be taken at his own estimate. "Poets, my liege, succeed better in fiction than in truth," was supposed afterwards to have been his courtier-like answer to his King, who was inclined to resent that his restoration was not commemorated in a work of the same literary value as that which praised the Protector. Andrew Marvel, in his vigorous ode, rightly says :

> Much to the man is due,
> Who from his private gardens . . .
> Could by industrious valour climb,
> To ruin the great work of Time,
> And cast the kingdoms old
> Into another mould,
> Though Justice against Fate complain
> And plead the ancient right in vain;
> But these do hold or break,
> As men are strong or weak.

So Milton, too, joins in eulogy of the Protector a little later. He says "that business was artfully procrastinated," etc. "In this state of desolation to which we were reduced, you, O Cromwell! alone remained to conduct the Government, and to save the country."

We cannot deny the greatness of Cromwell; but

his was *not* the only power left in England. Looking at events as Sidney saw them, we may trace his disappointment in its various stages—from doubt to disapprobation, from opposition to condemnation.

England was left at the King's death in the same state as for two years previously (minus his intrigues, and having a, because unknown, "unspotted prince"), in the hands of "two authorities, neither supreme" perhaps, neither with any right founded on precedent, each with a different view of the needs of the times. There was a Parliament of 150 members, and an Army of over 10,000 horse and 24,000 foot. Could they agree? Sidney, as Lieutenant of Dover, had a quarrel with his officers in March, 1651; the Committee of the House who had been appointed to investigate it, restored to him his horses and goods, but his command had been taken from him. Nedham, a friend of Milton's, the editor of the *Mercurius Politicus*, who had supported the Parliament in his *Mercurius Britannicus* (1643-6), the King in his *Mercurius Pragmaticus* (1646-50), and coming under the fresh regulations for the censorship of the press, began a new series in favour of the Cromwellian party, put forth a communication from the Hague, dated April 19, 1651: "On Saturday last the Lord of Oxford and Colonel Sidney fell out at a play here, and are gone into Flanders to fight it out." However, this was prevented. So Sidney appears to have gone to the Hague, while waiting the appeal to the Council of State.

The relations of England with the Dutch Republic were most peculiar. There were two parties in Holland;

the Orange party, who had lost their prince in 1650 (who was the father of a posthumous son, afterwards William of England), was opposed to union with England, while the republicans wished for it. Charles II. had been protected by his brother-in-law till his death, but when some of his adherents murdered the parliamentary envoy Dorislaus, he was obliged to leave the Hague. Members of the Orange party continually insulted the English ambassador, St. John, and encouraged the Royalist refugees to do so. Cromwell and Vane had, some time before, written to the States-General, "Let us be but one people." But England and Holland could scarcely be united, when Holland and England were divided into parties who hated and baulked each other's plans. The Orange (or Lowestein) party eventually forced a war upon England (1652), which was conducted with splendid spirit on, and was most creditable to, both sides. The great Dutch admirals found worthy foes in the enemies whom they had despised. At the same time it must be remembered that the English and Dutch were commercial rivals, and that war in those days was the natural result of two nations desiring to extend their commerce in the same direction. Sidney did not stay long at the Hague. His visit is of no importance, except that it gave him the opportunity of meeting men of the defeated parties, and of a wider outlook on to the policy of Europe. Without remembering that causes, not nationalities entirely, were the ideals of the seventeenth-century politicians, we shall scarcely be able to understand what Sidney and others

meant as they alternately glorified the Dutch, and sought alliance with them, and rejoiced over the English victories.

Sidney returned to England. He had no more military work to do, and he seems to have taken the deepest interest in the progress of events at home. And it was a time in which such minds would take an interest. The ordinary reader often passes over those five years of the Commonwealth. The King is put to death. Chaos is the consequence. Oliver Cromwell comes to the front. He is a great strong man, a noble enthusiast, or he is a vile hypocrite. In either case no one else is worth more than a passing mention. Such a summary is no caricature of popular opinion.

But when Sidney again took up his parliamentary duties early in 1651, a most interesting experiment was being tried. A knot of men, far in advance of the rest of the nation, were endeavouring to make it accept blessings which it did not want. Coke writes: "To say the truth they were a race of men most indefatigable and industrious in business, always seeking the men fit for it, and never preferring any for favour nor by importunity." They did not enrich themselves, they accomplished some most useful reforms, and they worked as hard as any English Parliament ever did. They had everything to do. Their weak point was that they had no right to do it, and that nobody was particularly anxious to have it done. These defects opened the way for Cromwell's ambition.

Algernon Sidney took part in at least two committees

on typical questions. He was on that (which indeed consisted of most of the members of the House) for considering the "agreement," which sat every Monday and Friday, from the middle of May, 1651, till about August. In 1650, Fairfax had proposed his scheme. It was very good in theory. Very briefly, it was as follows:—The electors of England were to be householders, not receiving alms; Parliament was to be elected every second year, and to appoint a Council of State to carry out its wishes. All civil and judicial matters were to be within its province; but religious teachers were only to be paid out of the revenues, nonconformity not to be interfered with. Milton addresses sonnets impartially to the leaders of the republican and the military party, a little later, to Vane and to Cromwell, in which he compliments the former, who knows, he says,

> Both spiritual power and civil, what each means,
> What severs each, thou hast learned, which few have done.

Vane, whom in spite of Burnet, we venture to think an able man, was Sidney's leader, if he had one. But the fate of Fairfax as a politician is typical of his times. The great general and the author of the national scheme was not able to control his own household. Lady Fairfax asserted herself, supported by her Presbyterian chaplains, till she drew her husband back from taking his share in the public work. Lady Fairfax represented a large class who would have preferred monarchy and Presbyterianism combined to the most perfect "liberty"

which all those "wise and good" men might have given. It was natural, therefore, that those who had the power in their own hands did not come to any decision on the great question of how soon they should part with it. The House went on sitting, and occasionally resolving itself into committee altogether, as usual now.

Sidney also was one of those on the committee on John Lilburne, whose career gives us an idea of the kind of formidable dangers which this theoretical Government had to meet with. He was popular. It was not.

There had been much discontent in the army before the Irish expedition. Fairfax and Cromwell put it down. But there was just a chance that the Levellers would succeed for a time in trying their hands at what they might be pleased to call Government. John Lilburne, who had given proof of his capacity for State affairs by proposing that "Charles Stuart should be tried by ordinary jury," had made himself the mouthpiece of those who professed to see "England's new chains discovered" in the act of the Parliament. He was committed to the Tower in March, and released in May, 1649, a man whom no one could prosecute or pardon with impunity. While Cromwell was away in Ireland he began again. He was brought before the House; the charges against him were examined by a committee of fifty members. His offence this time was not directly against the Parliament, and they could more easily take it up. He brought private charges against Sir Arthur Haselrig, one of the Council of State, and presented them in a petition to the House.

He had great command of language, of the unparliamentary kind, and seems, like other demagogues, to have been delighted when he might take up its attention. The committee sat twelve times, and in January, 1652, made its report to the House, who proceeded to punish him rather more for what he was than for what he had at that time done. Of course Sidney had nothing to do with the sentence, nor with the fact of the House usurping judicial functions. He learnt perhaps from this to take into account, and to allow for, the manner in which a clever, violent man can gain popularity, not because he deserves it, but because he defies a strong power.

He writes :—"there is a sort of sedition, tumult, and war proceeding from malice. This cannot happen in a popular Government, unless it be among the rabble, or when the body of the people is so corrupted that it cannot stand, but is most frequent in, and natural to, absolute monarchies. The ways of attaining it have always been by corrupting the manners of the people, bribing soldiers, entertaining mercenary strangers, opening prisons, giving liberty to slaves, alluring indigent persons with the hope of abolishing debts, coming to a new division of lands, and the like. Those who uphold popular Governments look upon vice and indigence as mischiefs that naturally increase each other and tend to the ruin of the State. When men are by vice brought into want they are ready for mischief. There is no villainy that men of profligate lives, lost reputation, and desperate fortunes, will not undertake.

Popular equality is an enemy to these, and they who would preserve it must preserve integrity of manners, sobriety, and an honest contentment with what the law allows." Sidney, who further quotes with approval, "He that hath virtue and power to save a people can never want a right of doing it," is of all men hardest on popular agitators.

He also worked on other committees. One was on the union with Scotland, a most important subject for consideration; and in 1652 he was chairman of that which entered into the delicate question of payments to be made out of confiscated estates and army arrears. Ludlow boldly challenges the world as to the conduct of the Long Parliament in such matters. "It will appear that for the space of ten or twelve years (they) did not in all that time give away among themselves so much as their forces spent in three months." But all the same their forces had to be paid. The "breaking of eggs" represented a considerable expenditure, and the glorious deeds of the Commonwealth, to which Sidney can justly refer with pride, had to be supported by more or less forced contributions. It is perfectly true, as he says: "Neither the Greeks nor the Romans, in the time of their liberty, ever performed any actions more glorious than freeing the country from a civil war that had raged in every part, the conquest of two such kingdoms as Scotland and Ireland, and crushing the formidable power of the Hollanders by sea; nor ever produced more examples of valour, industry, integrity, and in all respects complete, disinterested, unmovable, and incor-

ruptible virtue, than were at that time seen in our nation. When Van Tromp set upon Blake in Folkestone Bay the Parliament had not above thirteen ships against three-score, and not a man that had ever seen any other fight at sea but that between a merchant ship and a pirate, to oppose the best captain in the world. Many other difficulties were observed in the unsettled state, few ships, want of money, several factions, and some who, to advance particular interests, betrayed the public. In two years, our fleet grew to be as famous as our land armies, the reputation and power of our nation rose to a greater height than when we possessed the better half of France, and the kings of France and Scotland were our prisoners. All the states, kings and potentates of Europe, most respectfully, not to say submissively, sought our friendship. This," he concludes, with bitter sarcasm, pointed by cutting references to the Dutch war of 1665, "this was the work of those who thought basely of the public concernments. These were the effects of the negligence and ignorance of those who, being suddenly advanced to offices, were removed before they understood the duties of them, These diseases were certainly cured" by "divine monarchy."

There were many defects in the working of this parliamentary rule, but it was, with one exception, the "rule of the wise," so far as they could be found in England and in that age. Never was Plato's idea of a philosopher's reconstruction of a State more likely to be realised. But they were not lawful governors; they did not dare to rely on their popularity; they had

none, though they were a popular Government; they could not allow the fundamental doctrine of free representation to be carried into effect. The peers had not sat since February, 1649. In the eyes of Sidney, as of many others, this was a mistake, but one which would have to be rectified by degrees.

But, after all, the great cause why it was possible for these men to begin to formulate a new constitution, was that which prevented their work from coming to a happy conclusion.

It was all very well to say, with a parody on the words: "Put not your trust in princes, for *Vane* is the hope of man." Hope was vain. "Sir Humourous Vanity," as Sir Henry Vane the younger was called by his enemies, led the party which was gradually separating itself from Cromwell. Sidney adhered to it. It was, as we should say, *doctrinaire* in tendency. After Ireton's death, Cromwell's character developed. He spoke of Worcester as a "crowning mercy;" in which sense he employed the words may be left undecided. Cromwell had put down Lilburne; he did not want any "other dog" to bark, much less "five beagles," as the incendiary called his grievances. But he kept up the estimates of £90,000 per month for the army; he really backed up the petition of the Council of Officers to Parliament in 1652, and slowly and deliberately plotted and planned, till he was ready to ask Whitelock the question, "What if a man should take upon himself to be king?"

Whitelock's answer, which Sidney might have given

though they did not agree on many points, marks his first estrangement from Cromwell. "The Lord-General's face changed" towards the man who was of opinion, that if they were to have a king, they might as well have a Stuart as any one else.

In fact, all the leaders of the Commonwealth, in contradistinction to the Cromwellians, thought that their infant was growing very well, as Marten put it. A little more time, and they would be able to present their Government to the world in good working order. The Parliamentary Bill, which had so long been under consideration, was to be passed in such a form as should secure the House from dissolution till the end of 1653 at least. But Vane, who relied on the Council of State, of which Sidney was this year a member, and Cromwell, who was the hope and leader of the Council of Officers, "were running a race" for power. Cromwell won! The veriest child remembers the day on which the mace was ordered away as a bauble!

All the really excellent theories, which were in their unripened state, fell to the ground. The philosophers were put down by force; nobody cared; "not a dog wagged its tail."

But the 20th of April, 1653, was a bitter day for Sidney.

"It happened," says his father, "that Algernon Sidney sat next the Speaker on the right hand. The General said to Harrison to put him out; Harrison spake to Sidney to go out, but he said he would not go out, and sat still."

We can imagine that bit of by-play very easily. Colonel Harrison was the son of a butcher at Newcastle, and though that might make him no worse soldier or ruler, still it is impossible not to suppose that, in an age when even the wars had scarcely broken down caste, Harrison did not rejoice in the chance of asserting himself over one his superior in birth, talent, and education.

In Sidney's pictures, we see a man whose very features seem to betray his character, which had, in his later years, always a touch of Coriolanus in it.

To be ordered by Harrison! Well, Sidney had been in the army, and, like all great minds, when he did obey, he obeyed with all his ability any one who gave a just command. The whole end of the philosopher is "to do without constraint what others do for fear of the laws." But Harrison was there as the instrument of Cromwell, who had, in the eyes of the Republicans, betrayed their cause, who now turned on the men whom he had deceived with scurrilous abuse, which he, if any one, knew was not deserved. He threw mud, and it has stuck, so that those who least believe in him, think that there must be truth in the charges he brought against those with whom he had worked.

The exclamations of Vane and Wentworth, the silence of Whitelock—who remarks afterwards that it was strange that no one resisted, but at the time apparently saw it was as useless as others did—form a background to our mental picture of Algernon Sidney, as, with

anger and scorn, he sat still, apparently deigning to speak nothing but the curt words of refusal he had uttered. "The General said again, Put him out." There was a contrast, no doubt, between the two men, Cromwell in his passion, which, from being assumed had probably become real, and Sidney in the haughty reserve of an insulted gentleman. "Put him out," said the older man. "Then Harrison and Worsley put their hands upon Sidney's shoulders, as if they would force him to go out; then he rose," says his father, "and went towards the door."

West has given us the effect of the dispersion of the Long Parliament; but we would like a small picture of that incident by a painter who could bring out the significance of it, who could put into Sidney's face something of his noble anger. He was one-and-thirty, and the ideals of a man of that age who has been in the world have either been frost-bitten, or have vitality enough to be turned to practical account. If the latter, then, what militates against them, so far as they are endeavours after the chief good, wounds a sensitive spirit in a very keen and personal way. It was the first great disappointment of Algernon Sidney's life. Things had often gone wrong before; but, though it was no surprise, here was a shock which was enough to make him "lose faith in his fellow-men."

He had once thought Cromwell had "just notions of public liberty." Perhaps he had. No doubt it gratified the Republicans to see that after all they had

forced his hand. The *coup d'état* was made too soon. Six weeks later he had to call another "Parliament," which eventually resigned its power into his hands. He became Lord Protector. He refused to be King. We have no doubt that if it had not been for the battle of the 19th and 20th April, in which he conquered, events would have turned out differently. Vane was defeated, utterly; but by forcing Cromwell to fight too soon, he made him give battle at a sacrifice.

Lord Lisle followed Cromwell, and from that time the two Sidneys stand opposed to one another. Philip became one of Cromwell's counsellors; Algernon retired into private life.

Cromwell had succeeded; but he lost the support and favour of some of the best men in England. Even Harrison deserted him. But Milton acted as his panegyrist. His administration stands out in brilliant contrast to that of the Stuarts; but, as following the fortunes of Algernon Sidney, we have endeavoured to indicate the hopes and wishes of himself and of his noble party. Perhaps now we can see why at his trial he astonished the Court by the following words: "Cromwell, though he was a tyrant, and a violent one," he said, "could not bear the doctrine that possession was the only right to power. You need not wonder," he observed in parenthesis, as if he had seen the incredulous sneer of some around, "that *I* call him tyrant! I did so every day in his life, and acted against him too!"

When Cromwell succeeded, and the Long Parliament

was turned out of doors without regret, and even with favourable comments of those who might be supposed to have supported it, Sidney had learnt two things: That the best-intentioned body of men, who are in advance of public opinion, may fail—must fail, and will meet with no gratitude till the body of the people are educated to appreciate their reforms; that ambition finds room to grow in the midst of an assembly of men who by the strictest tests have excluded all but those they themselves think public-spirited. There was no "Opposition" left. The remains of the Long were all "Government."

These practical lessons were of use to the man who should write the "Discourses."

CHAPTER III.

WAITING AND WORKING. 1653—1659. ÆTAT. 31—37.

> Shew men dutiful?
> Why, so did'st thou: Seem they grave and learned?
> Why, so did'st thou: Come they of noble family?
> Why, so did'st thou: Seem they religious?
> Why, so did'st thou.—*Shakespeare.*

ONE of the first occupations of Sidney's new leisure was not, apparently, to fall in love; but to write about it. He seemed to have been struck with the want in his own character. He, a "son of Penshurst," and not devoted to a fair dame as well as to his country! Something was wrong. So after one or two other incidents, which are presently to be narrated, he settled down at Penshurst, and inspired perhaps by the thoughts of Spenser, his great-uncle's friend, took himself to task as to his position with regard to women. The deliberation with which he discourses on "vertuous love" has a slight air of unreality about it. In spite of his bold assertions we are inclined to imagine that he was one who never quite found his ideal of womanhood realised for himself, but at the same time he is one of those who are thoroughly capable of genuine "Platonic

friendship." He had a very great respect for women—though it is said he did not pass quite stainless through his earlier life—as all the greater souls of the world have, whenever there are difficult times in which cultivated women have taken their proper places. It is within the experience of all refined minds that some of the most enjoyable intellectual friendships are between those of opposite sexes. They are instinctively sought. It may be blended with, or be quite apart from, any ordinary attractions on both sides, but the fact remains that in the republic of learning both men and women are attracted to their complementaries. No fear lest the spread of culture should set man against woman, or woman against man. It is true that the experience of the world has been limited in this matter—since really educated women have been rare—but so far as it goes, where men and women have been comrades and fellow-workers, their respect and affection for each other have been increased, in every age of history.

Such were Algernon Sidney's views on the subject of women as he discussed them with himself. At his trial he said: "I believe there is a brother of mine here has forty quire of paper written by my father, and never one sheet of them was published; but he writ his own mind to see what he could think of it another time, and blot it out again, maybe. And I myself, I believe, have burned more papers of my own writing than a horse could carry." So, too, he claims, in his Treatise on Love, to write and speak what he knows in himself. He declares: "I am perfectly free from any consideration

without myself. I write my thoughts at one time, that in perusing them at another I may come to knowledge of myself." Perhaps, after all, therefore, this dispassionate reflection is that of his cooler moods. Certainly, little as we can find in the scanty materials of his life about his love-story, he considers himself extremely "susceptible." "Love . . . . I confess, hath with more violence transported me than a man ought to suffer himself to be by any passion."

The style in which his argument is written points to the fact that it was composed in his earlier life. It has not the clear vigour of parts of the "Discourses on Government." The sentences are more involved; the ideas are less firmly expressed. In spite of the essay being "the representation of the present thoughts," the reader of the "Discourses" (about which, however, more will be said) misses the power of the personal conviction. It is there; but it is not overwhelmingly present. But of course we must remember that not only are the writings, between which most people who know them think it necessary to institute comparisons, the works of a mind at different stages of its progress, but in two different styles. The political writer speaks as an authority. His book was never finished for the press by himself; but it was of the class in which an author speaks as a teacher. If he do not feel confidence in himself to "give his opinion for what it is worth," he does not attempt the subject. If he should lecture, as it were, those who attack him do so as accepting the challenge of a man who is worth opposing, and his

scholars regard him as a master. But the essayist who writes to clear his own mind without the intention of publishing may be allowed scope for some wandering round his subject. He simply requires to see what he genuinely thinks, and though "things fardled up under heads are most portable," the point he seeks is that of accumulating materials.

Nevertheless, this essay is valuable to the student of Algernon Sidney's character, simply as a piece of auto-psychography, if we may be allowed to make a word to express what is not precisely self-analysis—we fancy that such a term would be most convenient in our self-conscious age. It is not that Sidney expresses anything but ideas common to pure and chivalrous minds; but the fact of his thinking them interests us. He begins, in the usual way, by trying to arrive at some definition of an indefinable subject, and adverting to the Stoic, Epicurean, and Platonic theories, asserts that "it is the most intense desire of the soul to enjoy beauty, and where it is reciprocal, is the most entire and exact union of hearts. . . . For my own part I can only conclude that whatsoever pleaseth the eye and the fancy is beautiful, that whatsoever we think beautiful we desire to enjoy, and that desire is love." But he reasons that man is, as it were, placed in the "middest of a steep rock," from which position it is easier to fall than to ascend; he is tempted to evil, for his nature is both spiritual and sensual; the perfect love, therefore, is of "an excellent mind clothed with a beautiful body." Its effects are numerous and strong. But Sidney is of

opinion that "perfect union of hearts is the perfection of lovers' happiness; for though we are inclinable to desire the senses may not be excluded, yet having the principal end of our desires we may rest fully satisfied." These words show the character of the man as of a certain type, perhaps only to be understood by those (men, at least) who belong to it. It is, perhaps, more a woman's ideal of love than a man's—in the earlier stages of modern society, at all events. But Sidney admires beauty intensely. "Wheresoever there is beauty, I can never doubt of goodness," he says, though this he qualifies by the assertion that once a face is beloved it can never change its "real excellence" to one who loves. And this accepted, "no man is in love but with an opinion of the excellency of the beloved person above all others . . . . My passion hath made itself master of all the faculties of my mind, and hath destroyed all that is in opposition to it."

Returning with an apology to himself for his wanderings (but, after all, he is only writing to ease his troubled thoughts, and the paper will be burnt next month in all probability, he declares), he argues against those who contemn love. It is natural; so far as prudence is thought of, she is best employed in choosing a worthy object; it is common to all men, save a few of the vulgar and of the ambitious. Religion only forbids it being made the chief passion, "to take us from the worship and love of God," and "for unlawful desires they are not more contrary unto religion than to love." Finally, saying none are made happy without love, he proceeds

to assert that women are worthy of it, and of the intellectual part of man's affection. "Who is it that doth not know that every age hath produced some very excellent in those things for which men most prize themselves, and yet these grave fools despise them? . . . It is true that women have not those helps from study and education as men have; but in the natural powers of the mind are no ways inferior." Sidney might well have sheltered himself behind Plato; but he declares (being in no fear of ridicule from the age before the Court of Charles II.), "if they did not deserve our love (they) would move our envy; and unto whatsoever they apply themselves, either learning, business, domestic or public government, show themselves at the least equal to our sex. I should be glad if I could except military business, naturally disliking anything of violence among them; but even in that many have been excellent;" (he might have added: "within these last ten years"). It is to the reigns of the next Stuarts that we owe the low idea of women which so long prevailed. When the political effects had ceased to be felt, the social degradations remained, so far as women were concerned. The type of man we shall have to allude to as representative of the Restoration became extinct by degrees; but the fashionable woman remained "at heart" much as she was at that unlovely period. In this essay we see how modern Sidney was, and, as an important parenthesis, that we owe the stunting of female intellectual cultivation to the very quarter it is supposed to lead to—by those who are not specially brilliant, and also by those whom

Sidney has called "these grave fools." The Elizabethan Court, nor that of Charles I., can scarcely be recommended as perfect models, while that of James I. was quite enough to contemn royalty; yet there was a nobler ideal of womanhood during the first part of the seventeenth century than at any time till the beginning of this, when it was gradually restored. The improvement, just now beginning to tell, came at first by fiction, which, with all its fancy, can only succeed in stirring up emulation in real people who surpass heroes and heroines in number and in quality.

Sidney's house was one which was connected with some very noble women: the oft-quoted Lady Jane Grey was a cousin of the older generation, and nearer still came "Sidney's sister, Pembroke's mother." He had every right to think well of women, for his own mother, though he only mentions her in the formal fashion of the times as "my lady," seems to have been a charming woman. For some time she had charge of Princess Elizabeth, the child of Charles I., a delicate but amiable girl of fifteen, who, in spite of the romances that used to be made about her harsh treatment, was latterly as carefully cared for, and as kindly provided for, by "the murderers of her father," as was possible or usual in those days. She died young; but her death was certainly not hastened by ill-treatment, though in the sorrow about her father and the separation from all she loved, she was another of the examples of the rule of life, that guilty and innocent must suffer together. But the Princess Elizabeth, in the sadness of

her grief for her father's death, found sympathy with Lady Leicester, and spoke of her stay at Penshurst in 1650 with evident regret. In 1659, Algernon writes to his father in the formal style of sonship then, of the loss, by his mother's death, "that is so great to yourself and your family, of which my sense has not so much diminished, in being prepared by her long, languishing, and certainly incurable sickness, as increased by the last words and actions of her life. I confess persons in that temper are most fit to die; but they are also most wanted here."

Sidney's other connections soon began to give him trouble. "I was not very much surprised," he writes in 1661, "to find myself betrayed and robbed of all that with which I had trusted Lady Strangford." This requires an explanation. On retiring from public life in 1653, he had visited John de Witt at The Hague, returning home in 1654, where he divided his time between Leicester House in town and Penshurst, occasionally visiting the country houses of his connections. But, so far from having enriched himself by the public service, he was speaking in no unreal way when he said, in his Essay on Love, that "the meanesse of his fortune" forbade him to hope for success in his suit. He had a small estate and a small independent fortune, besides what his father chose to do for him, which became less and less as years went on. But he did not deny himself one luxury—the "noble madness" of helping an ungrateful spendthrift. Lord Strangford had married his sister. We have a peep at a very

pretty family quarrel, in which Algernon does his best to make peace, tries to reform his brother-in-law and make him carry out his marriage contract, while out of his scanty funds he advances money to the prodigal. This ends as such laudable attempts do. Lord Leicester transfers some of his bitter anger against the offender to the peacemaker. So far as can be ascertained, Sidney never gets a single word of gratitude from any of those concerned. "You are well enough served," writes his father in 1660, "for bestowing so much of your care where it was not due and neglecting them to whom it was due, and I hope you will be wiser hereafter."

When Sidney left public life, and Vane refused a seat in the Council, Lord Lisle had accepted it. The two brothers were therefore separated by the whole width of the gulf which yawned between Cromwell and his former associates, now his most bitter contemners.

The religious question, which to others had been *the* chief part of the strife, does not seem to have been considered very much by the brothers. They, unlike most people, looked at Cromwell's administration merely as a piece of political history. Lisle took it as the best thing that could be done for England; Sidney as interrupting a noble process of State-making. Political events from 1653–9 do not seem to have altered his opinion. Meadley gives a "remarkable" letter from Philip Lisle to his father in 1656. Family and political differences are concentrated in it in one long sneer. Sidney had probably the high spirit of his family; but from his later years, as from his earlier conduct, we are

disposed to think of this attempt to prejudice his father's favourite as a piece of jealousy, as of meanness, on the part of one who afterwards tried to rob his exiled brother of the share of his inheritance which was his by right.

Lord Lisle is speaking of his relations to Cromwell, and the advantages which his father might hope for if more friendliness were shown, and begs pardon for being too forward, if he has been so. "And then, my lord," he continued, "I have my constant sorrow to see that your lordship never omits an opportunity of reproach to me; and in earnest, I think, laying all other matters aside, this which has appeared most eminently upon this occasion is very extraordinary, that the younger son should so domineer in the house, that not only in regard to this matter, which I have spoken of, but at all times, I am uncertain whether I can have the liberty to look into it or no; for it seems that it is not his chamber, but the great rooms of the house, and perhaps the whole, he commands, and upon this occasion I may most properly say it, that his extremest vanity and want of judgment are so known that there will be some wonder at it." The elder brother was evidently much nettled. What was the use of his sacrificing his pride, and working for the family good, if this younger son was to have command of his father's town house, and, with "want of judgment," deliberately insult the Lord Protector, who had all in his power?

When relations "fall out" they have no sense of conventional decency to restrain them with regard to each other. It is a pity. Society would be much

happier if connections who cannot agree would ignore "blood-relationship," and fight merely as acquaintances may do, which gives ample scope for all the bitterness which is necessary for self-defence, and leaves quite sufficient margin for aggressive purposes. As it is, the habit of taking all sacrifices and concessions as dues, and all wrongs as deliberate insults, puts an end to the delicate, kindly feeling of mutual dependence and good-will, which is the blessing of friendship, and the crown of family life. Members of a family injure affection by straining at impossible unity, and the "harsh speech," permissible by cruel irony, only "between those who have loved" or are supposed to, in itself makes the incompatibility of temper which is not confined to conjugal relationships. Lord Leicester and his elder sons—all straining against each other—the suffering mother, the spendthrift son-in-law, the money difficulties which kept cropping up, besides any little disturbances which might arise through the conduct of the youngest son, Henry Sidney, or about the married daughters, must have made even the "ideal Penshurst" a place in which one troubled by the world could scarcely find domestic peace. No wonder his mind was inclined to reading. He had had the advantage of practical training first before he began to theorise. In later years Burnet said: "He had studied the history of government more than any man I ever knew." He had no thought of publication then. He simply led an intellectual life, and devoted himself to the work of self-improvement. He was only five-and-

thirty; every one knew that Cromwell's life could not be prolonged, except Cromwell himself. So even at this period Algernon Sidney began the study of politics as a science; to be continued, after an interval, without the hopes which at first animated him. It might be said that

> I have found
> Among his papers, time-stained notes which tell
> Of deeper studies . . .
> Of high hopes and ambitions, such as fire
> Those who . . . are placed by Fate
> On such high vantage that to will
> And labour is enough, and each approach
> Of honour . . . flings back early doors
> To their unbroken youth.

For among those produced at his trial were many that "had been writ, perhaps, these twenty year." Of course many men make statements about themselves in which their neighbours believe as much as is compatible with other circumstances. With others, one takes their word against all apparently contradictory circumstances. Whenever Sidney indulges in autobiography we accept his statement as truth, knowing that "though few men are honest, men prove their deepest folly in not believing those who are to be trusted." When, in self-defence, he makes his boast, or rather assertion, for to him it is mere matter-of-fact—impossible that it should be otherwise—that no man can accuse him of having said a word that was false in his life, we are sure that it was so. Even to save himself he would not have so spoken of freshly-written MSS., besides which it could be proved

by the ink he pointed to. And so, among the papers which answered Filmer, begun to be collected by himself three years before his death, naturally enough, we find the earlier writings, the germs of his literary thought. They were only ideas at this stage. Like all writers on such subjects he had his Commonplace books, which, as Fuller says, "contain notions in garrison." He "marshalled his ideas" in this, no doubt preparing himself for the work for his country which he was never to be allowed to do. There would be room for Ashley Cooper; Buckingham, whom he had endeavoured to befriend in earlier days—when Sidney was on "the Commission," and the lad of one-and-twenty had offended the party in power—would joke and gibe; young Rochester, now "in long coats," would laugh at the "tragical airs" of "the last of the regicides;" Temple would at length find that he was safest in retirement after years of patriotism; but whoever was in power among those to whom he had rendered service, were it to Charles himself, there would be no place for Algernon Sidney. In studying the histories of the past he had learnt one thing—that the great are always misunderstood. Yet his favourite Plato had escaped all persecution, so far as his tenets were concerned. He proved the exception. Socrates was an example of the rule.

This formed the beginning of his self-education for his great work, in the jarring "life of retirement," meaning in his case, as in many others, merely that quarrelling goes on in smaller circles, and diplomacy

is more hopeless than where the friction of opinion may presumably end in action. Public disputes generally are, after all, about some existent grievance, which two parties with some ideas of common-sense undertake to redress in different ways; private quarrels are often entered on with light hearts, because the members of a family, having nothing else to do, create them, perhaps unconsciously, out of the necessity of the mind for stimulus and exercise. As often as not it is this reason which makes unoccupied men and women who were never taught to employ their leisure the daily torturers of their own households. Lord Leicester does not seem to have liked Sidney's entering again on public life; but, judging from analogy, when he left his father at Penshurst in 1659, "sick, solitary, and sad," a man of Sidney's temper—(because philosophic, *therefore* peculiarly susceptible to annoyance when every subject was thought not to have two sides to it)—would certainly not be sorry that his principles allowed him again to enter upon a wider life.

Lord Leicester and Algernon had each right on his side. The elder man naturally wished to have his son with him, and, with the forgetfulness which sometimes characterises the older generation, did not see that Algernon as naturally wished to take his place in the world. Nor did Lord Leicester like the second Protector much better than the first.

Sidney, on the contrary, with his party, saw in the peaceable accession of Richard another chance for England. They were perfectly aware of the weak-

ness of Richard. They knew that by refusing the title of King, for whatever reason, Oliver had not given them the shelter which the law allows to those who obey the King *de facto*. At the same time the six years of the Protectorate had removed some dangers. The Council of Officers remained, but the crest of the wave which had carried Oliver to power was no longer towering like a great "bore" above the others on the stormy sea. The Army had been in existence fourteen years. Time means change of constitution. The body is, and is not, the same as it was.

Evelyn sums up the situation on April 25, 1659. "A wonderful and sudden change in the face of the public. The new Protector, Richard, slighted; several pretenders and parties strive for the government; all anarchy and confusion. Lord, have mercy on us!" And again on the 29th, "The nation was now in extreamest confusion."

Pepys, whose diary begins January, 1660, does not take it to heart very seriously. He is intensely curious as to Parliamentary affairs, but his penetration does not go very deep. He thinks most of his own matters, and though his notices are very vivid, so far as they go, we gain no special information as to the inner thoughts of men and parties. "Strange the difference of men's talk," he notes a little later. No wonder that it should be strange.

There were the Royalists, supported by all those of the Church of England, men who were suppressed, leaderless, but anxiously looking to the future. (In

Cheshire there was a movement put down without much trouble.) There lay the potential energy of the nation, however. By the laws of reaction, by the recoil from fanaticism, by the desire for the "good old times," the kingless people sought a central Government which might last. There were the adherents of the Protectorate, and there was the Council of Officers. But, as Pepys says, January 30, 1660, "There seems now to be a general cease of talk; it being taken for granted that Monk do resolve to stand to the Commonwealth and nothing else."

With these parties Sidney had nothing to do. Amidst all the personal squabbles he re-entered public life perfectly free and unfettered. Vane and Haselrig had been concerned in various acts for and against Cromwell; they had never willingly left the scene of action, except when sent to the Tower or expelled from a Parliament. The number of Republicans who formed the Fourth Party was about fifty. As will readily be seen, in this crisis they were hopeful, so far as principles were concerned, and might suppose that the restoration of the Long Parliament, after the other attempts at government without it, meant that even the army was in favour of the Commonwealth. But, after all, it was in the old defective fashion. Seventy or eighty members were gathered together; they were men who had subscribed to the engagement, and were capable of governing; but they had no right but their second-hand might. The Republican party was doomed to defeat. If so, in which manner would it be best to be defeated?

After this interval, Sidney's mind had changed or developed. Tyranny had been broken ; monarchy had been taught a lesson ; he had no objection to kingship, properly limited. On the other hand, something must be done to check the power of the sword. This is the key to the situation. The aim of the rulers must be to establish a self-acting civil power in England, resting on the support of the orderly part of the governed, and in alliance with those nations whose interests did not clash with hers.

In pursuance of this scheme, "the Rump"—to give this remnant of the great Parliament its last name for once—appointed "a Committee of Safety, a Council of State, notified to foreign ministers their restoration to power, and, to satisfy the people," says Dr. Lingard, "promised, by a printed declaration, to establish a form of government which should secure civil and religious liberty without a single person, or kingship, or House of Lords."

Algernon Sidney's name appears again on the list of the Council of State. He was one of those who wished to limit the power of the Commander-in-Chief, and make the army recognise that it held its power from the Parliament. The object was excellent, but the case was inherently weak. "*Lord-General Lenthal*" was typical of his House! Sidney had agreed with Haselrig in asserting that military force must not be independent of civil power in England. Did the aspect of affairs once more awaken his suspicions that this civil power was not fit to control the military force?

In this confusion there was an honourable retreat for one who loved his country and was devoted to her interests, but was too far-sighted to believe in the stability of his party—if it existed any longer. There comes a crisis in a great statesman's life when there is a transition stage from following to leadership. No longer is he bound to the party; the party slowly begins to turn to him. Vane would never lead. There was a chance for the development of a patriotic party under Sidney, if the next few months could be got over. This feeling may have had something to do with the ready acceptance of a mission which would take him out of England during a very critical time. It was everything for Sidney not to be compromised, now that he had had, as it were, a fresh start; not from any personal fear, but from the new ideas which in his letters we trace to have been working in his mind.

The service demanded of him was one for which he was well fitted. It was important. It was national. Sidney might, indeed, serve his party by "keeping an eye on Montague"—afterwards Lord Sandwich—Admiral of the Baltic fleet; but to mediate in the affairs of Northern Europe was a task which was for the interests of England irrespective of all party feeling. He was admirably qualified for the work, nor were the five years of retirement wasted. The force of his character is shown in Whitelock's objection to go with him. "I know well," he says, "the overruling temper and height of Colonel Sidney." He was one of those who must be first, whether they consciously desire to be so

or not. Whitelock did not like "precedency" to be taken of him, though it was naturally due to the Earl's son, but still less did he enjoy the idea of being one of three Commissioners, one a younger man of strong theories, wide knowledge, and personal ascendancy, instead of being an "Ambassador Extraordinary" as he had been before. Mr. de Boone was appointed in his place. With him and with Sir Robert Honeywood as his fellows, Algernon Sidney left England about the middle of June, 1659. They were leaving behind them what Evelyn calls "a sad face of things," but with a fine field before them for the display of their talents There is no greater satisfaction in life to a capable man than to be called to a difficult situation which he is conscious he can fill well. Sidney had that satisfaction here.

His father complains that he only writes a "wrangling letter or two" about money; but his anxiety on that point may readily be excused in the light of his subsequent experience. Parliament voted £2000 towards expenses, but one can understand that Sidney had no wish to be without private means in this new departure of the public career which he evidently then believed was before him.

Conscious of power, position, and abilities, with a past which surely was more innocent of any cause for Nemesis than any man of his times, tied to no party, willing to accept all the good that was offered, not even dreading the restoration of Charles Stuart, much as he despised him personally—the star of Algernon Sidney

must have seemed once more in the ascendant, as he met Montague in the Sound, and the four Commissioners talked over their business. To eke out Whitelock's picture of Sidney's power of command we may take the words of one who liked him even less, Bishop Burnet: "He had a particular way of insinuating himself into people that would hearken unto him and not contradict him." The two together point to that indefinable method of impressing his individuality on others which is indispensable to a statesman.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SERVICE OF ENGLAND. 1659—1660. ÆTAT. 37—38.

It is well in life to care greatly for something worthy of our care, choose worthy work, believe in it with our souls, and labour to live, through inevitable checks and hindrances, true to our best sense of the highest life we can attain.—*Prof. Morley.*

THE state of Europe in 1659 deserves a moment's consideration. In France, Louis XIV., whose power had been steadily growing during his minority, had humbled the Parliament, after the struggles of the Fronde; and the foiling of the nobility not only caused the triumph of Mazarin, but prepared the way for an absolute monarchy. The age of Louis XIV. is proverbial for its glory. So far as one can look with approval on the aggrandisement of the political force of a nation and the establishment of despotism, adding strength for the time to all military and diplomatic feats, we can agree that it was an age of splendour. Mazarin allied himself with Cromwell, who still believed, as no one else did, in danger to European peace coming from Spain. Even Charles I. had seen that France, not decaying Spain, was the Power against which Europe ought to be

guarded. But in 1657 England helped to play the game of France. In 1659 the treaty of the Pyrenees was signed between France and Spain, and, as a member of the League of the Rhine, made the year before—which united France with Sweden, Denmark, Bavaria, Brunswick, and Hesse to maintain the Treaty of Westphalia (1648, the settlement after the Thirty Years' War)—Cardinal Mazarin had a very fair chance of interfering in the affairs of Europe on reasonable pretexts whenever he chose. From his death, in 1661, till about 1683 may be called, as French historians do call it, the most splendid reign of Louis XIV. France—strong, prosperous outwardly, with vast ambitions and able servants—setting the example of despotism at home, and ever ready to extend her power abroad; under an absolute ruler, "who had in him stuff for four kings, and an honest man"—the latter was left undeveloped—is the fact which was ever in the minds of those, like Sidney, who looked to the future. Combination against her was essential to European interests, and to the progress of liberal ideas. At the same time opposition which took the form of open war, would simply mean destruction to any bold enough to undertake it. Thus the alliance of the Northern States of Europe "against the Octopus of the West" (to borrow a modern phrase with a difference) was more important than those concerned were ready to see. Not thirty years later William III. of England had to act on the views then held by Sidney. At that time the Prince was a child of nine or ten. The prospects of his party were not bright. Holland was,

however, holding her own well in Europe, and had become a very respectable "little great Power," with a navy which had to be taken into account in all diplomatic problems. Leopold of Austria (1658–1705) was almost sufficiently occupied in watching the Turkish force, as it threatened to overwhelm Eastern Christendom, and in trying to arrive at some order in his Empire. "Sea was" its "wrath, still working after storm." Poland was equally divided against itself and in fear of the Ottoman Power. It was conquered by the Swedes in 1655, and recovered its independence in 1660.

We have left till the last the two malcontents, Sweden and Denmark, whom it was the business of the English Commissioners to reconcile and unite in alliance with England. The idea of a religious alliance—though Richelieu, Mazarin, Cromwell, and kindred minds successively repudiated the theory—was not without weight still; indeed Cromwell himself cherished it in one direction.

By taking the narrative from Sidney's own words as far as possible, we shall be able to see how he wrote and his work as it appeared to himself. The materials here are more full than usual, since we have his letters to his father, as well as those which he wrote in conjunction with his colleagues, and in which his inspiration and phraseology are easily traced.

Algernon Sidney, Robert Honeywood, and Thomas Boone, on board the *Langport*, inform the Council of State that they are approaching the Skaw on the 16th July, 1659. They have been detained at sea by un-

favourable winds ; and when they do get to Elsinore the King of Sweden has not arrived. But four nations are assembled for peace or war. Frederick III. of Denmark has been besieged in his capital by Charles X. of Sweden, when the Dutch fleet appeared on the scene, and the English arrived soon afterwards. On the 31st July the English Plenipotentiaries have an interview with the King of Sweden—first, formally, and then, in the afternoon, privately—and get him to say that he would like peace, but was not going to declare that he would treat till he knew whether his enemy (who, without foreign interference, was presumably but not really at his mercy) was also inclined to do so. On August 1st there was a consultation with the Dutch, who had given their word that their fleet should not slip away and do damage elsewhere while the English were watching the rival armies, and had also undertaken to bring the King of Denmark to make peace. On the 3rd of August negotiations were opened with that prince, who "did not well understand the state of his affairs," either then or later. The original offence had been on his side. Three years after the resignation of Queen Christina, Charles X. (ambitious and able, who afterwards impressed Sidney very favourably) had been attacked by Frederick at a critical moment. Charles had his hands full of his Polish campaigns ; but he contrived to turn upon Frederick and compel him to accept peace till he was ready to take him in hand. The treaty of Roschild, made on this occasion, which Frederick had then unwillingly agreed to, was therefore appealed to by him

when he was afraid that something worse might happen to him. He had intended to violate it when he was ready, only, unfortunately for him, Charles was ready first. He protested against the breach of faith on the part of the Swedish King, and, now that he had got peacemakers who might perhaps support him, was inconveniently willing to go on with the war. He spoke of his allies, especially of the Duke of Brandenburg, though he wanted time to consult the Emperor and the King of Poland; he required that Jutland and Holstein should be given back to him. The English Commissioners stand firm and bring him to two points: whether he likes the treaty of Roschild, and whether he will accept their mediation. As soon as negotiations are entered upon he thinks that he has a fair right to grumble. States and persons alike have a habit of accepting aid as if they gave it, and as if they were very gracious in allowing advice to be offered. So Frederick, in the usual fashion, gives the English to understand that it is very kind of them to help him, but, of course it is partly their own interest which is at stake (as no doubt it was), and he made use of every trick by which he could gain time and show his independence.

The Commissioners are most dignified. At one time they reply: "It was not our work to oppress the King of Denmark, but rather to make such a peace for him as might consist with justice and the present condition of those States interested in this quarrel and in the commerce in those seas." After more delays, on the 11th August, "the Hollanders, and two of us, viz.,

Honeywood and Sidney, intended to go to Copenhagen to begin with the Danish King, and then return to the Swede, hoping to find him in a better temper than when we left him." For Charles was in some "ill-humour, into which he was grown upon a dislike of the agreement at the Hague, our communication with the Holland Ministers, and his opinion that we had an intention to oblige him to a peace which he did not like." Both parties, but especially Charles, were waiting for the English and Dutch fleets to be withdrawn. On the first arrival of the English Commissioners, their fleet had been inspected ; sickness and scarcity were among them, and the first thing that had to be done was to pay them £1500, which was not specially convenient. The Dutch fleet was in good condition, and it had the remembrance of a splendid fight in the Sound (in which a great admiral, De Witt, had nevertheless been killed) to give it prestige. If the English and Dutch had not been peacemaking, they would have probably been fighting as usual on their own account. As it was, England was inclined to back Sweden, as the Dutch had supported Denmark. John de Witt had appointed De Ruyter Admiral of the Fleet, which consisted of 75 men-of-war, many of them built with all the latest improvements, and with an army of 4000 men on board, besides the carefully-chosen sailors. Men were admirals or generals as it suited them ; ships had sailing-masters who were responsible for their progress, and the vessels were manœuvred, to the amusement of the sailors, sometimes in the language of command addressed to bodies

of troops. Monk and Blake, for example, each changed his career in mid-life. Blake "made his reputation at the siege of Taunton; Monk spent the latter part of his days as an admiral." But there was another character which a sea-going man might play in these days. General Montague quietly slipped away from the Sound, leaving the other English Commissioners unsupported, in August, 1659. The truth was he wished also to be a diplomatist and take his share in the events at home. The pretext was that he had no money or supplies. Algernon Sidney (who had had some vigorous quarrels with him), in deep indignation, writes to the Council that he has nothing to do with this step. He shows that it is not ordered, is most embarrassing, in leaving Commissioners without power to enforce their orders as arranged, is dishonouring to the service of the Commonwealth, and endangering English interests. It was quite preventible, for, though everything was short, yet, out of their private means, an advance might have been made which would have kept at least sixteen ships at the Sound. The Dutch seem to have behaved very well, and, perhaps, it is not fanciful to attribute this in part to the personal respect for Sidney which always was felt by the party of John de Witt, the friend and patron of De Ruyter, a good man and a famous admiral. Very quickly the disagreement between the Admiral of the English fleet and the other Commissioners told. "Two frigates and one ketch," were all that were left by Montague. The King of Sweden said that the mediators, who were not arbiters, "made projects upon our fleet," observe the Commissioners, "and he,

laying his hand upon his sword, had a project by his side. Soon after we" (Sidney, Honeywood, and the Hollanders) "took our leave, and returned to the town, thinking that behaviour something extraordinary to be used to the Ministers of so considerable States, and that His Majesty did not well remember by whose help he had been maintained all summer."

The Danish sovereign was supported by the Ministers of Austria and Brandenburg, who wished to keep the Swede engaged, while they robbed him of his more southerly dominions. The English Commissioners despair of bringing Charles Gustavus to reason. He thinks he is a great hero, and that whatever happens, England and France must support him against Holland and Denmark. So the affair drags on. Meanwhile the English Commissioners are in great want of money, though they are obliged to be "at exceeding great expense by making journeys perpetually in a wasted country, and living in a besieged town."

The Council kindly inform them that they may return to England if they like; but they dare not leave Copenhagen without an English minister, so send Mr. Boone to explain matters. Sidney tells his father that he would come home in any case, did he need him, now that Lady Leicester had gone to rest; but he had asked to be the one chosen for the message to the Council. Not very curiously, "the princes with whom we are to treat, and our fellow mediating ministers did not consent."

"Our business," he says in November, "is now

brought to this: that the King of Sweden doth offer to make peace with Denmark almost upon the same terms that were offered unto him by the mediating ministers," if he is protected against the House of Austria. France will gladly do this. "More is expected of France than is desired," he says with some shrewdness, and so on. Sidney declares, "I do not know how our stay here will be understood; but if it be not thought of merit, I shall think that I have to very little purpose exposed myself unto a great deal of trouble."

Sidney briefly sketches the position of affairs; peace or war in the principal places of Europe depending on what is done in this "ugly northern part of the world." He tells how Sweden, France, and the Protestant princes of Germany are on one side, Austria, Spain, Poland, on the other. The English, rather favouring the Swedes, are opposed to the other neutral Power—Holland—which supports Denmark. Yet it is not correct to say that the Dutch were neutral. At the date of Sidney's letter to his father, De Ruyter was preparing for one of his most brilliant victories. Nyborg was an important fortress, deemed almost impregnable by Charles Gustavus. By a series of clever movements the Swedes were deceived, and on the 24th of November, 1659, the Dutch and Danes bombarded the fort, and forced the town to capitulate. "The whole of the Swedish army—about 7000 men and 3000 horses—went into captivity, and Denmark had regained its liberty."

This was a great change. Charles Gustavus died

soon after, as people said, of a broken heart. In the new position of affairs Sidney despatches the Secretary to ask for orders. He speaks highly of the late King's character. "I think never any prince had so many and potent enemies as he, that did so well defend himself against them with a small strength; his greatest was his own industry, wit, and courage." More than ever Sidney desires to settle the business. Before the death of the King he had only thought of the interest of England, but his chivalrous nature accepts now "an obligation by all the laws of humanity and charity to endeavour to secure the protection of an infant and a very virtuous mother." The same sentiment is expressed in the official letter of February 25th. "The protection of them hath something of noble and generous in it, besides the concernment of England, which is nearly interested in the preservation of the Crown of Sweden, which is now in danger to be broken, and those to get the pieces who will make use of them to your prejudice."

In another despatch to Thurloe, speaking of the latter delays, he says: "Unless they be forced they will never consent to the conditions proposed. . . . In my opinion the States had no reason to wonder at our protest, unless they thought," he adds, with a touch of his sarcasm, as he writes to the Secretary of State, "that we, having no force here, should receive the law from their ministers, as if we served a State that had not a ship in the world, or that was plunged into such difficulties and disorders, that we could never hope

to see it recover out of them. We were of another opinion."

All Sidney's temper was needed to support the credit of his country. "England hath no force here, nor is at present in a condition of sending any;" but all the same England's honour must be maintained. The Dutch began to be most insolent, and it was evident that a collision between England and Holland was at hand. The Hollanders, detaining the Swedish ships, put themselves out of the mediation. They were no longer neutrals. "The conditions at length granted to Denmark are more easy than those offered by the Hollanders, and also better for Swedish interests. Having composed the quarrel between the two Kings, our next business must be to improve the peace to the good of our nation. The first is to break the alliances that either of them have made to our prejudice, which are principally with the United Provinces: that State hath, ever since the war with England, endeavoured to strengthen itself with defensive alliances with almost all the princes of Europe." Next, to unite Sweden and Denmark in a defensive league with England. "Besides those things which have happened here to incline Denmark unto England, the change of Government which is there expected is not a small inducement."

"I hope," says the son, "that your lordship will have reason to be pleased with this re-entry upon the stage of the world."

Sidney had good reason to be proud of the success of their mission, which had been entered upon without

proper support, and had ended in a diplomatic triumph, in securing all the objects aimed at, the friendship of the two reconciled States, and the frustration of the Dutch schemes. He went on to Stockholm to complete the agreement, and then in June could say, "I find this Crown exceedingly satisfied with the peace that is made."

In the meantime, Charles II. had returned to London on May 29, 1660, under well-known circumstances. Sidney looked upon all the powers he had as extinguished by the coming of the King, and refused to act as a public minister, "except it be giving notice unto the Crowns of Sweden and Denmark of the restitution of the ancient government in England." . . . "The conclusion of what hath been managed by my colleague and me must be left unto such persons as the King shall please to employ in it. God be thanked," says Sidney, probably with great sincerity, but with some disregard of grammar, "he will find little difficulty; if he can but write his name he will be able enough for anything that remains to be done."

At this moment, conscious of having deserved well of his country, and believing his father would be in favour with royalty, while he himself had nothing to dread from the restoration of the ancient government, Algernon Sidney had but one wish—to hear from home. His letters had gone astray, and he had no money. He was also impatient to know in what way he would be looked upon by the new Powers.

In May, when the restoration was expected, he wrote: "If I do not receive new orders, I shall return

speedily home, and shall then follow that way which your lordship shall command, and my best friends advise, so far as I can without breaking the rules of honour or of conscience, which I am sure will never be expected from me by your lordship nor those whose opinions I consider." In June he speaks of his return: "I do not at all know in what condition I am in there, nor what effects I shall find of General Monk's expressions of kindness towards me, and the remembrance of the ancient friendship that was between us; but the Lord Fleetwood's letters to the Senate and private persons here mention discourses that he makes much to my advantage." A week later he says, "I am uncertain how my actions or person will be looked upon at home. I hope I shall be able to give a good account of all that I have done here, and for other things I must take my fortune, with the rest of my companions." His father had been made one of the Royal Council, and on June 27th, Algernon congratulates him on this first step. He wonders if it is true that Lord Lisle is to be made Governor of Ireland; if so, "I should not be content to stay here, believing that if I am capable of doing service in any place in the world it is there, where I have some knowledge of persons, places, and business."

He hopes that his father will exert his influence in the Council about the release of the Count d'Ulfeldt, who had been badly treated by the Swedish Senate. Sidney had used all his powers to get him restored to liberty and property; but it was of no use. On several other points he gives his father most useful information,

and defends himself from the charge of favouring Sweden too much. Of course the Dutch do not like it; but their designs are "so prejudicial to England, that I should have been a very ill servant to my country if, upon friendship and familiarity that I had with their persons" (that is, if he had preferred to please De Witt, and De Ruyter, and the Dutch ministers because he liked them privately) "I had not thwarted them." Then he says: "I will pawn my life and reputation upon it, that if His Majesty will give me the powers that are requisite I will effect" an arrangement which would have cemented the Northern alliance.

Sidney obtained one token of gratitude for his services, from the young King of Sweden—a gold chain, and a picture of his father set in diamonds. From his well-served country he was to have none.

On the 21st of July he left Copenhagen for Hamburg, where he proposed to await the letters which were to decide his future movements.

He was excessively anxious for news. That he got from England "of public things is punctual and certain enough; but my friends are so short in what particularly relates to myself that I can make no judgment at all upon what they say. Perhaps the truth is they can say nothing to my advantage."

We are particularly anxious to clear up this point, since most authorities assert that Sidney was opposed to the restoration of the King, and refused to return to England.

We assert, therefore, that, so far as words may be

trusted, Sidney, though his opinion of Charles Stuart was as low as that held by any high-principled man of one utterly immoral in every way, was by no means opposed to limited monarchy, and intended to treat the King with all the respect due to the chief magistrate of the people. Again, far from refusing to return home, that was his greatest wish for years; and particularly when, as he believed, his services to the nation had cancelled any party feeling against him as one of a number who had opposed Charles I. Not return home! Sidney evidently expected to be received as befitted one who, through diplomatic service unbacked by any force, had really obtained for England an advantageous "peace with honour."

"I think it was a far greater respect unto the King to cease from acting anything by powers not desired from him, and to stay here as private men attending his pleasure, than on a sudden to throw off the business and be gone as in a chase. I confess I was not averse to have returned immediately, but I did more apprehend the being accused, as I often am, of precipitation, than the evils that could befal me by my stay."

No letters coming from his father, though instruction reached him to go to Hamburg or some convenient place, Sidney goes south. He writes a long letter to his father from Frankfort on September 8th, when he hints at passing the Alps. This letter is very full of interesting detail, and, among other topics, gives a notice of the Queen Christina, late of Sweden.

He does not believe what she tells him, merely because she says it. "For I am," he writes, "in this year's employment grown much less credulous than I

was." In a postscript he asks his father to help Mr. Myssenden, who had shown him "many curtesies," and wished to be employed by the English Secretaries of State in Foreign Affairs. "He was too monarchical for me and my brethren," meaning (though the words are misinterpreted by many who do not realise the despotic system then gradually being set up throughout Europe) that the Secretary was in favour of the absolute system of government just then engulfing the constitution of Denmark.

At last the expected letter arrived. Can we picture to ourselves the wounded feelings of a son who had written so often and so affectionately, during all the months of his busy negotiations and hard work, on reading such undeserved reproaches as those which we copy? Can we not imagine the disappointment when all his services were swept aside as worthless? We can scarcely conceive anything more likely to wound Algernon Sidney's feelings in every way than the letter which Lord Leicester wrote to him in August, 1660.

For some of the disagreeable intelligence Lord Leicester was not responsible; but he was evidently highly displeased with Algernon. Had Philip's insinuations at length taken root? Or was it only his annoyance and concern at the favourite son's position, finding expression, like a woman's anger, in taunts at the one who was the object of his care? "Only those we love have power to torture us." Lord Leicester used his power rather freely.

We give the letter, trusting that our readers may by this time sympathise with the ambitious young states-

man, who was never to receive his country's thanks for what he had done, and, harder still, never to be allowed to serve her again, in a direct way.

This was the turning-point of his career, and we think that we are not fanciful in supposing that it had some effect upon his character, as most certainly upon his opinions.

"Disuse of writing hath made it uneasy to me," Sidney read; "age makes it hard; and the weakness of sight and hand makes it almost impossible. This may excuse me to everybody, and particularly to you, who have not invited me much unto it; but rather have given me cause to think, that you were willing to save me the labours of writing, and yourself the trouble of reading my letters."

Here Sidney must have stopped and recalled to mind his frequent letters and messages; besides, in February, he had sent a letter by his official secretary, writing: "I have appointed this bearer to wait upon your lordship, so that if you care to know anything of our business here he may give you a very full relation, having been employed by me in it. I have not heard anything of your lordship this many months, which is a great trouble to me. I desire your lordship to take me out of it, and if your own affairs on health will not give you the convenience of writing to me, that you would appoint some servant to send me news of your health and concernments, how you are and how you live in this time, which I know must needs be solitary to you, I fear, uneasy."

Surely, Sidney must have thought, that the letter from his father began well, as he read the accusation of disregard for filial duty brought against him. Had his father not got his letters? Reading on, he finds that his letters have been received, but that the secretary, Mr. Storry, made such haste from Penshurst, that, "coming very late at night, he would not stay to dine the next day nor to give me time to write."

Then Lord Leicester says he thought it best not to write, but through others he had wished to "convey the best advice that my little intelligence and weak judgment could afford." This advice may be compressed into "Efface yourself." Hamburg was selected as a place of retreat.

This was pleasant news. "Not to come to England.... Not to think an account was, or could be, expected of you here, unless it were of matter very different from your transactions there." Remarkably pleasant for a man like Sidney, who had prided himself on his work for personal and national reasons; his work ignored, and he himself told to retire into some safe place. "Others have received letters from you with presents of wine and fish, which I do not reproach or envy." Then why mention them, unless to show that Lord Leicester was jealous that his son had not paid him the same attention in kind as he paid to others?

Perhaps Sidney would think that his father, having attained his own wishes, might aid him. He was to be under no delusion. "Though I meet with no effects nor marks of displeasure, yet I find no such token or

fruits of favour, as may give me either power or credit for those undertakings and good offices which perhaps you expect of me."

Lord Leicester is going to retire to his "poor habitation"—"princely Penshurst" others called it—where he hopes to be gathered in peace to his fathers. As for his son, ". . . you must give me leave to remember of how little weight my opinions and counsels have been with you, and how unkindly and unfriendly you have rejected those exhortations and admonitions, which in much affection and kindness I have given you upon many occasions, and in almost everything, from the highest to the lowest, that hath concerned you." Sidney probably did remember the state of domestic peace in which he had lived during the great part of five years; wherein, quite naturally, unless he had agreed to differ with his father, every topic was sure to bring on a discussion, in which the older man thought it a personal insult for a son to dare to disagree with him. Perhaps even this preface was familiar, and Algernon knew that he had thereafter to expect a list of his misdeeds. So he got them. "I know not what you have said or done here or there; yet I have several ways heard that there is as ill an opinion of you as of any, even of those who condemned the late King. And when I thought there was no other exception against you than your being of the other party, I spoke to the General" (Monk, Sidney's friend) "in your behalf, who told me that very ill offices had been done you, but he would assist you as much as he justly could."

Sidney would here remember the proverb, perhaps, which compares a cool friend with a bitter enemy. His indignant letter about Montague, from Copenhagen, had no doubt been paid back with interest. His services to Monk were forgotten. So he thought then; though later he found that they were not. In this he was a little too hasty. But why depend on Monk? Was not the King enthroned? Did not Hyde—Lord Clarendon—recollect Lord Leicester's ancient services to the King? Might not Charles himself be grateful for the kindness shewed to his young brother and sister at Penshurst? Had not Sidney really saved his life? Besides, there were those services which he perhaps now regarded as a proud man regards good work which is unappreciated, something to be laughed at cynically, with the feeling that it is not the offerer but the refuser of a thing of value who loses by its rejection.

"And I then intended to speak to somebody else; you may guess whom I mean."

Why not?

"But since then I have heard such things of you, that in the doubtfulness only of their being true, no man will open his mouth for you. I will tell you some passages."

Here at length was tangible ground. The charges were few. Sidney had written in the album of the University of Copenhagen,

> Manus hæc inimica tyrannis
> Ense petit placidam sub libertate quietem,*

with his name put to it.

* "This hand hostile to tyrants by the sword seeks a calm rest under liberty."

This classical quotation had displeased the French minister, though he could not read it, and he had torn it out of the book.

This abstract sentence, though applicable to events in Denmark, was surely not to exile a man from England, under any ruler or rulers. It was characteristic, and perhaps, even in this sense, foolish.

Also set down against him was the exclamation to which we have already referred, that the "late King's death" was the "justest and bravest action that ever was done in England or anywhere else." Then, when a plot against himself was spoken of, Sidney had said to the King of Denmark: "I hear there is a design to seize upon me; but who is it that hath that design? Est-ce notre bandit?" Frederick had probably thought it not inapplicable to Charles, at Cologne, maintaining a little Court for such plunder and freebooting in a royal way as a prince out of work, and between Louis XIV., the United Provinces, the German Princes, and the Empire might find ready to his hand. It was not—so far as a piece of descriptive sarcasm went—an unhappy term to any one who was familiar with the habits and wanderings of the exiled prince, who later had "no wish to go on his travels" again. At the time it was spoken, evidently in ordinary conversation—since only so could personal details be mentioned—Sidney, for one, did not consider that Charles Stuart was King of England. The twelve years of exile were not counted till afterwards by legal fiction as those of "His Sacred Majesty's most happy reign," except by loyal Cavaliers. "Besides this," went

on Lord Leicester, "it is reported that you have been heard to say many scornful and contemptuous things of the King's person and family, which, unless you can justify yourself, will hardly be forgiven or forgotten; for such personal offences make deeper impressions than public actions, either of war or treaty."

True again; but considering that Charles permitted the greatest freedom of speech as to his personal doings, priding himself in that he was the master of wit, and had no occasion to fear any man's tongue—sharp sayings might have been pardoned, if there had not been the scorn.

Lord Leicester then mentions Mr. "Alfield," whom Sidney had spoken of in an earlier letter, son-in-law of Count Rantzoe, who had made friends with Charles. "He (Alefeld, as Sidney writes it) is pleased with this employment, and I am confident believes he shall govern all England; not well distinguishing between the thoughts of a banished prince, who in his youth sought entertainment to mitigate his afflictions and the serious actions of a great and established king." Mr. Pedcombe offers to influence Alefeld. "I will try," says Lord Leicester, "what he can or will do." The tables are turned indeed. The English Plenipotentiary is to be beholden to the Danish Resident.

"Sir Robert Honeywood is also come hither."

He has been received by the King; so that Sidney need not be so much afraid of his negotiations being brought against him. "You will have no more to answer for than your own particular behaviour."

The great money question is mentioned. Sir Robert

Honeywood and Sir John Temple will try to get repayment for that spent in the public service. Then, in private affairs, Sidney is "well enough served" in Lady Strangford's ungrateful return to his affection and kindness. Lastly, his mother has wished to leave a remembrance, which his father calls "my gift; for so I think you are to understand it, though your mother desired it."

Finally, Sidney is recommended to stay at Hamburg "though the Bill of Indemnity be lately passed; yet, if there be any particular and great displeasure against you, as I fear there is, you may feel the effects thereof from the higher powers, and receive affronts from the inferior." The letter ends more kindly than it began, with a promise—"I will help you as much as I can;" but by the time it was finished, Sidney must have been in the state of "extreme discontent" in which he wrote afterwards to Sir John Temple.

So ended his first and last employment in England's public service in a responsible independent position. So far as he could see, the work which had cost him so much time and anxiety, had certainly done him no good, and in a great measure was temporarily undone by those who came after. He had indeed, so far as anything then appeared, "spent his labour to very little profit."

And what was to be done now?

Instead of being Algernon Sidney, the successful statesman, he was Algernon Sidney, the exile. The disappointment had fallen the more heavily, when, after years of waiting, he had thought that the dawn of success was at hand.

CHAPTER V.

IN EXILE. 1660—1662. ÆTAT. 38—40.

> Is there a choice for strong souls to be weak?
> For men erect to crawl like hissing snakes?
> I choose not—I *am* Zarca!
>
> *Spanish Gypsy.*

In January, 1660, Sidney writes a few words of complaint.

He speaks of his own circumstances, and says that he hears that his father has been asked to help him, but "your lordship's answer was, I had made a provision for myself and discharged you of that care."

This was evidently in answer to Sir John Temple's remonstrances with Lord Leicester, dated November 21, 1660, in which Sidney's old friend, whom he had first known in his early manhood in the Irish service, tells the father plainly that Sidney is "very much unsatisfied with your lordship's last letter." And again, a few weeks later, Sir John Temple says: "He writes very discontentedly, and expresseth much trouble, and a very deep sense of your lordship's displeasure, which he thinks falls very unhappily upon him in this condition." Sir John Temple asks that assistance and encouragement

may be given to Sidney, who, hearing of his father's cold answer, writes :

"If there be no difference in living, but he that hath bread hath enough, I have some hopes of finding a provision for longer time than I mentioned. If there be no reason for allowing me any assistance out of the family, so long as there is a possibility for me to live without it, I have discharged you. If those helps are only to be given to those that have neither spirit nor industry in anything to help themselves, I pretend to deserve none. Or, if supplies are only the rewards of importunity, or given to avoid the trouble of being solicited, I think I shall for ever free you from that reason. And as I have for some years run through greater straits than, I believe, any man of my condition hath done in England since I was born without ever complaining, I shall with silence suffer what fortune soever doth remain unto me.

"I confess I thought another conclusion might reasonably have been made on what I said, but I leave it to your lordship's judgment and conscience. If you are satisfied in yourself, you shall not receive any trouble from your lordship's most humble, faithful, and

"Obedient servant,

"ALGERNON SIDNEY."

Roma. $\frac{\text{December 29,}}{\text{January 8,}}$ 1660.

In spite of his father's expressed wish, Algernon Sidney had not stayed at Hamburg and had gone to

Rome. His reason is characteristic: "I was extremely unwilling to stay in Hamburg, or any place in Germany, finding myself too apt to fall too deep into melancholy if I have neither business nor company to divert me; and I have such an aversion to the conversation and entertainments of that country, that if I had stayed in it, I must have lived as a hermit, though in a populous city."

He stayed a few days in Venice, and was half tempted to go to fight against the Turks—always a service of danger ready to hand. "When," quotes Mr. Malden, in his "Vienna, 1683," from De la Guillatière (translated 1676), "when the Sultan makes any great preparation, Malta trembles; Spain is fearful for his kingdoms of Naples and Sicily; the Venetian anxious for what he holds in Greece, Dalmatia, and Trieste; the Germans apprehensive of what remains to them in Hungary; Poland is alarmed; and the consternation passes on as far as Muscovy; and, not resting there, expands itself to the Christian princes in Gourgistan and Mingrelia; Persia, Arabia, the Abyssinians, are all in confusion; whilst neither man, nor woman, nor beast in all this vast tract but looks out for refuge, till they be certain whither his great force is intended." In the year of Sidney's death (1683) half a million of Moslems flung themselves against Western Christendom, and were foiled. Of Charles of Lorraine and Sobieski of Poland it has been said by the author quoted before: "There at one blow they frustrated the last great Mahometan aggression against Christendom, and set

free the minds and arms of the Germans to combine against French ambition on their Western frontier."

Till then the Turk was the terror of Christendom, and Bossuet (who preached before the members of the only great royal Court which at that time secretly intrigued with the Sultan—that of Louis XIV.) used the ravages in Eastern Christendom as a text for his eloquent appeals for Christian love and unity.

However, Sidney, on second thoughts, did not so utterly despair of his country as to exile himself for ever from her, even for such a service. He intended to stay during the winter of 1660–1 in Rome, and then he hoped that his father would tell him what to do. So he writes to Sir John Temple, and a few days later to his father. In the latter letter he speaks of the news from England, and acknowledges: "I think the counsel given me by all my friends, to keep out of England for awhile, doth too clearly appear to have been good. . . . Nothing doth seem more certain to me than that I must either have procured my safety by such means as Sir Arthur Haselrig is said to have used, or run the fortunes of some others who have shown themselves more resolute."

The news from England—we do not require detail of what is well known—was, up to November, that the King had come back; that he talked very amusingly of his travels and escapes; and that every one was apparently enraptured to see him. General Monk was made Lieutenant of Ireland—not Lord Leicester. Montague and Monk each had honours conferred on them. The

"Convention" was inclined to be moderate. The Presbyterian element was strong in it. Lord Northumberland, Sidney's uncle, was to the front. Round Sidney's old commander and kinsman, the Earl of Manchester (whom he had left for Cromwell and Vane, when they were together), had gathered the nucleus of the House of Lords. Intrigue after intrigue began to be unravelled. There were many who were safe—why, nobody could quite tell. Few lives were to be lost. Monk had advised the King to make few exceptions to the Act of Indemnity. Seven persons were excluded at first—regicides—"Scott, Hollands, John Lisle, Backstead, Harrison, Say, and Jones. They went on to add Coke, Broughton, Dendy." These were to lose lives and estates. Vane, Haselrig, Lenthal, Lambert, Sydenham, St. John, and fourteen others were to be punished as Parliament might afterwards direct. Milton was to be prosecuted. Whitelock escaped. Such were among the items of intelligence which reached Sidney. In October Colonel Harrison and the first set of regicides were tried, Monk and Montague (now Lord Sandwich) sitting on the bench, among the other Commissioners, at the Old Bailey; while Sir Orlando Bridgeman (to whom Sidney had written in 1643 saying that his father could answer for his attachment to the King's cause) appeared for the Crown. Sidney had no personal sympathy with Harrison, as we know, but his death would make him forget something of their old disagreements. It certainly was not only the danger, but the chicanery of the whole secret history of the Restoration which affected Sidney.

Wherever he looked it was the same thing. Sidney did not know Pepys (though Sir Robert Honeywood is mentioned in his "Diary" as being fetched back by a man-of-war), but his comments on the behaviour of Thurloe's under-secretary represent, not inaccurately, some of the feeling of the time. Morland was knighted in May. "The King did give the reason of it openly: that it was for his giving him intelligence all the time he was clerk to Secretary Thurloe. . . . Sir Samuel was here on board; but I do not find that my lord or anybody did give him any respect, he being looked upon by him and all men as a knave." But on August 1st Pepys meets him again. The King has given Morland a baronet's grant, "to make money of." Shamelessly Morland tells his story. Pepys ends by saying: "The King had given him a pension of £500 per annum out of the Post Office for life, and the benefit of two baronets; all of which do make me begin to think that he is not so much a fool as I took him to be." And this was the tone of the time.

For the religious question Sidney cared very little as a *political* matter. But the morality of the Court—and he (unlike those Englishmen who had stayed at home and had only read Royalist pamphlets) knew beforehand what it was likely to be in one respect, whilst the sale of places utterly disgusted him—was quite enough to condemn it in his eyes. As the scraps of news drifted out to Rome, sometimes of trivial details, sometimes of important matters like the Act of Indemnity and of the calling of the "Cavalier Parliament,"

his tone changed. It was true that the march of despotism had been checked, that the Parliament, however composed of any party, would not permit a King to be absolute, and would henceforward jealously guard its own rights; but it was also true that the standard of honour for English public men was lowered. Future years were to show the infamy to which the highest by birth and position were ready to stoop. Even at this early date the unprincipled tone of the Court was felt; and it was not so much in personal as in patriotic sorrow and anger that Sidney wrote a letter to an unknown friend—we have wondered whether it were not to Monk himself, whom he might address as an equal, and to whom some explanation must have been given. It has often been quoted. It evidently belongs to some time early in the year 1661, since it refers to the Act of Indemnity. In it is a refusal to return home, and a condemnation of the restored monarchy, which was not written (or, judging by careful comparison of the other letters, would not have been likely to have been written) till Sidney saw that he could not conscientiously return to England. There were two points on which he was most sensitive—the honour of his country, and that sentiment which may be described in the phrase of older days as "the love of virtue."

Regretting now that he will not return, as before that he was not allowed to return, he writes:

"I am sorry that I cannot in all things conform myself to the advices of my friends. If theirs had any joint concernment with mine, I should willingly submit

my interest to theirs; but when I alone am concerned, and they only advise me to come over as soon as the Act of Indemnity is passed, because they think it is best for me, I cannot wholly lay aside my own judgment and choice.

"I confess we are naturally inclined to delight in our own country, and I have a particular love to mine. I hope I have given some testimony of it.

"I think that being exiled from it is a great evil, and would redeem myself from it with the loss of a great deal of my blood. But when that country of mine, which used to be esteemed a Paradise, is now like to be a stage of injury; the liberty we hoped to establish oppressed; luxury and lewdness set up in its height, instead of the piety, virtue, sobriety, and modesty which we hoped God by our hands would have introduced; the best of our nation made a prey to the worst; the Parliament, Court, and Army corrupted; the people enslaved; all things vendible; no man safe but by such evil and infamous means as flattery and bribery:—what joy can I have in my own country in this condition?

"Is it a pleasure to see that all I love in the world is sold and destroyed? Shall I renounce my principles, learn the vile Court arts, and make my peace by bribing some of them? Shall their corruption and vice be my safety?

"Ah! no. Better is a life among strangers than in my own country upon such conditions.

"Whilst I live I will endeavour to preserve my liberty, or, at least, not consent to the destroying of it.

I hope I shall die in the same principles in which I have lived, and will live no longer than they can preserve me. I have in my life been guilty of many follies, but, as I think, of no meanness. I will not rot and defile that which is past by endeavouring to provide for the future. I have ever had in my mind that, when God should cast me into such a condition as that I cannot save my life but by doing an indecent thing, He shows me the time is come wherein I should resign it: and when I cannot live in my own country but by such means as are worse than dying in it, I think He shows me I ought to keep myself out of it.

"Let them please themselves with making the King glorious who think that a whole people may justly be sacrificed for the interest and pleasure of one man and a few of his followers; let them rejoice in their subtlety, who, by betraying the former powers, have gained the favour of this, and not only preserved but advanced themselves in these dangerous changes.

"Nevertheless, perhaps, they may find that the King's glory is their shame; his plenty the people's misery; and that the gaining of an office or a little money is a poor reward for destroying a nation, which, if it were preserved in liberty and virtue, would truly be the most glorious in the world; and that others may find that they have with much pains purchased their own shame and misery, a dear price paid for that which is not worth keeping, nor the life that is accompanied with it. The honour of English Parliaments has ever been in making the nation glorious and happy, not in selling and destroy-

ing the interest of it to satisfy the lusts of one man. Miserable nation! that from so great a height of glory is fallen into the most despicable condition in the world, of having all its good depending upon the breath and will of the vilest persons in it, cheated and sold by those they trusted! Infamous traffic, equal almost in guilt to that of Judas! In all preceding ages, parliaments have been the palace of our liberty; the sure defenders of the oppressed; they who formerly could bridle kings and keep the balance equal between them and the people, are now become instruments of all our oppressions and a sword in his hand to destroy us; they themselves, led by a few interested persons, who are willing to buy offices for themselves by the misery of the whole nation and the blood of the most worthy and eminent persons in it. Detestable bribes, worse than the oaths now in fashion in this mercenary Court.

"I mean to owe neither my life nor my liberty to any such means. When the innocence of my actions will not protect me, I will stay away till the storm be overpassed.

"In short, when Vane, Lambert, Haselrig cannot live in safety, I cannot live at all.

"If I had been in England I should have expected a lodging with them; or, though they may be the first, as being more eminent than I, I must expect to follow their example in suffering as I have been their companion in acting.

"I am most in a maze at the mistaken informations that were sent me by my friends, full of expectations of

favours and of employment. Who can think that they who imprison them would employ me or suffer me to live when they are put to death?

"If I might live and be employed, can it be expected that I should serve a Government that seeks such detestable ways of establishing itself?

"Ah! no. I have not learnt to make my own peace by persecuting my brethren, more innocent and worthy than myself. I must live by just means and serve to just ends, or not at all.

"After such a manifestation of the ways by which it is intended that the King shall govern, I should have renounced any place of favour into which the kindness and industry of my friends might have advanced me when I found those, that were better than I were, only fit to be destroyed.

"I had formerly some jealousies; the fraudulent proclamation for indemnity increased them; the imprisoning of those three men, and turning out of all the officers of the army, contrary to promise, confirmed me in my resolution not to return.

"To conclude, the tide is not to be diverted nor the oppressed delivered; but God, in his time, will have mercy upon His people. He will save and defend them and avenge the blood of those who perish upon the heads of those who in their turn think nothing is able to oppose them.

"Happy are those whom God shall make instruments of his justice in so blessed a work! If I can live to see that day I shall be ripe for the grave, and shall be able

to say with joy, 'Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace.' Farewell!

"My thoughts as to King and State depending upon their actions, no man shall be a more faithful servant to him than I, if he make the good and prosperity of his people his glory; none more his enemy, if he doth the contrary."

This letter tells its own story. The troubled mood in which it is written is indicated by the rapid, eloquent sentences, at first so unlike Sidney's usual deliberate periods, even when he feels most strongly. It may be noted how once more he associates his actions with the other chief Republican, from whom he had tried to separate himself till they were endangered. Monk may have been right. What Sidney felt was dishonourable to himself he may have been too ready to condemn in others; but his chivalrous nature was keenly wounded by seeing that safety and honours were possible and probable for any able man who would betray his associates. As for Vane, he had much in common with him. All who try to reform must pay the penalty of rebellion if unsuccessful.

> Great men have been among us; hands that penned
> And tongues that uttered wisdom, better none:
> The later Sidney, Marvel, Harrington,
> Young Vane, and others who called Milton friend.
> Those moralists could act and comprehend:
> They knew how genuine glory was put on,
> Taught us how rightfully a nation shone
> In splendour; what strength was that would not bend,
> Save in magnanimous weakness.

We need never be ashamed of those who led "the

Great Rebellion," though, at the time of the Restoration, it was perhaps difficult to pardon justly. But the law of punishment is necessary infliction of severity upon those who have done wrong, and, in earlier times, prospectively upon those who might hurt the nation afterwards. No justification can be found for those who hold the right to punish as a means of extortion. "No innocent man," said Locke, "can accept a pardon," and no one who does not deserve it should be able to buy one.

In Vane's case, the motive of Charles was not as ignoble as that which actuated him in many cases, when his way of rewarding friends and crippling enemies was to make it possible for innocent or guilty to buy pardons from the courtiers. A moneyless and expensive Court must be a corrupt one, and, if the power be there to extort funds from others, it will also be an unjust one.

Sir Harry Vane was too dangerous a man "to let live, if he might be safely put out of the way," as the King wrote privately; and he was beheaded next spring. On the scaffold he was not allowed to address the crowd. Drums and trumpets drowned his voice, and note-books were taken from those who stood near, the lieutenant saying: "He speaks of rebellion, and you write it." In his farewell to his wife and children, he said: "I die in the certain faith and foresight that this cause shall have its resurrection in my death."

The resurrection was long in coming, and might have been longer but for the wickedness of the Court. The cause of the Commonwealth had failed. Worse, from

Sidney's point of view, was the character of the monarchy, for he (though he always adhered to his cause when it was most unfortunate, from noble if mistaken motives) chiefly cared, like a man of our own times, for a free people led by high-principled men, with some indifference as to the form of government which they lived under.

So he was stranded by the tide of circumstances upon a foreign shore, and, in the letter quoted, says farewell not only to his friend, but to English politics for sixteen years.

One thing which does not at first strike the reader of seventeenth-century literature deserves perhaps a word of notice. Sidney uses in it religious phraseology, which was a fashion with others, but with him meant what it does with a reserved man of to-day, that he was too much in earnest to care what inner depths he revealed. He thought with the exaggerated ideas of an exiled patriot, who concentrates the work of years into one in mental vision, seeing trifles in their collected aspect, and looks on everything as a tendency, whereby he sees more truth and falsehood at once than any person who is not an historian can do. This love of his country, it was part of his own identity, and to see it disgraced was an unspeakable grief to Sidney the patriot.

> To what strange solitudes some souls are brought—
> The great depths broken up ; who feel their grief
> In bitterness dissolving what they thought
> Their ideal pearls—whether hope, love, belief !
> May anchorage in self-control be sought ?
> Courage !—endure ! In that is strange relief.

Yes. "To put it short and plain, we must endure."

In saying "farewell to all his greatness," not even with the consoling, though often bitter, thought that the work he had hoped to do with his own strength was prospering without him, he turned to find what distraction he might in Rome itself. It is easy to imagine that the chief delight of a mind like Sidney's was in meeting with kindred spirits. Intellectual society had a great attraction for him: when he could not get that, he lived in solitude.

Though, as we have seen, he had a peculiarly sensitive nature, it was not one which entered sympathetically into the ordinary life of ordinary people. He was "terribly in earnest;" he was one of those "pure high souls," who see, indeed, but cannot understand, how others can be content to live illogically and with indifference to the spiritual insight which is such a real part of the thinker's life. The solitude of the great man was around Algernon Sidney. Not at first openly. Rome was a place where there was the best of society for those who belonged to it. Sidney had been there in boyhood, but did not find many of his English friends still alive. The place was changed, as always happens on a return visit, but he was as readily received as ever. "I do not see those signs of ease, satisfaction, and plenty, that were here in Pope Urban's time," he wrote; "but that little concerns strangers; the company of persons excellent in all sciences, which is the best thing strangers can seek, is never wanting. . . . . I sought nothing here but rest and good company. I find reason to hope I

may enjoy the one without molestation, and I do not know whether any place in the world doth afford the other in greater perfection than that which I here meet with."

Sidney's letters to his father are justly praised as being remarkably vivid sketches of men of the day in the higher Italian circles, in which it was not easy for strangers to become intimate. Of course those who had any remarkable gifts were always welcomed by men who were not their rivals. "I have," says Sidney, "some advantages in conversation, which are not allowed to strangers." He observes in one letter that many people, "all except priests," leave Rome as wise as they came, but, with some reserve, gives a description of the best known cardinals. His letters show very keen observation, and his cynicism becomes more apparent, though never obtrusive, as the time passes.

He became very friendly with Cardinal Pallavicini, whose character is that of "one who hath lived more among works and papers than most men;" simple and pure in life, laborious in work, he likes to labour "incessantly in knotty businesses, that require much pains and yield no profit. This humour defends him from having rivals in his pretences." He forgets "that in human affairs governors and ministers are not so much to seek what is exactly good, as what is least evil, or least evil of those things that he hath power to accomplish."

But we cannot quote at length from these letters, though they illustrate most effectively the characteristics of Sidney's life which have not hitherto come under

notice. He had a talent for society of a certain class. He could speak true compliments. Wherever there were wide views and ready discussions, where men were used to treat all subjects, as those do who are in the habit of hearing men of acuteness and ability differ—in a word, in society of the kind which was extremely rare then, Algernon Sidney shewed his real powers, and was most truly appreciated. But at all times those brought into contact with him found him a "superior man," and unconsciously, as people do, marked their own degree of mental capacity by their recognition of him. Just those whom we should suppose are irritated by him, are actually those who record their sense of his unlikeness to other men, without seeing why it should be so; while others, who are able to see the difference between man and man, perceive that his high tone is the conventional disguise of an uncommon nature. Yet "Your Grace is too costly to wear every day." And so, we see, why Sidney, in Rome, when it was possible to find cultivated society if it were to be obtained anywhere—was popular as he never really was in England. His friendship with Cardinal Azzolini, who at thirty-six had "the reputation of as good a head as any in Italy," is several times mentioned. Through him Sidney was invited to many of the stately "functions"—the name is the Cardinal's. Father Courtney, the head of the English Jesuits, a very able man, remembered Sidney, and through his offices and those of Cardinal Pallavicini, the English exile saw something of the society which was

found round their headquarters. Even at that time the word Jesuit meant to a certain extent condemnation; the organisation was a dangerous power within Holy Church. Amidst the intrigues for the succession to the Papal chair, which were going on while Sidney was in Rome before the death of the Pope, one thing was certain, that no Jesuit would be chosen; but as Sidney afterwards found a "congenial spirit" in William Penn, the Quaker, so here he seems to have enjoyed the society of men of all shades of Roman politics and creeds. For the ordinary amusements of the Papal city he cared very little, but "made a great deal of acquaintance in Rome" of "all eminent persons."

Naturally he was not understood. It seemed as improbable as impossible to most people then, as it does to many now, that a man could be at once religious and wide-minded. "Young Plunket, an Irish priest, gives me some trouble by foolish discourses. Amongst others, he says I am an Atheist. He was answered that it was very improbable, and that my life and conversation gave testimony of the contrary; but though it were, it concerned nobody here. This answer was made by the Abbot Hilarion, with some addition to my advantage; upon which he remained so mortified that he came hither two or three days since to make me an apology. I was glad of it, for though he could do me no prejudice, I would most unwillingly have any dispute with him, for he is esteemed one of the best wits in Rome."

Again, some other person, who had formerly been secretary to the Portuguese Ambassador (in England in

1650), said that "I was ever found to be violent against monarchy, a friend to Roman Catholics; one that in our last troubles meddled little with private business, and that had made my fortune by the war. With some other things like this; but none that I can learn which doth me any prejudice."

This information was sent to the Nuncio at Flanders, who had heard that Sidney "was the only enemy the King had left, and that I, being taken away, His Majesty might reign in quiet. These are but very slight vapours, and if nothing comes from England to my prejudice I will easily blow them away." This, although Rome, like all places where there are many opportunities of meeting in limited circles, "is ever full of bitter tongues."

Rome, as Sidney saw it—or rather as he enjoyed it—was a very different place to Rome as seen by others. Every man finds in a large city what he looks for, and Sidney looked for intellectual enjoyment.

But the reception he met with he appreciated at its true value. He writes: "I cannot but rejoice a little to find that when I wander as a vagabond through the world, forsaken of my friends, poor, and known only to be a broken limb of a shipwrecked faction, I yet find humanity and civility from those who are in the height of fortune and reputation. But I do also well know I am in a strange land, how far these civilities do extend, and that they are too airy to feed or clothe a man."

A little earlier Sidney tells us how much is necessary for food, and, indeed, even allowing for change of value in the coins, "the burden is not so great to strangers."

"Five shillings a day serves me and two men very well, for meat, drink, and firing." But in May, speaking of his misfortunes, he says that he was not shaken by those of his party, robberies from servants did not hurt him, he had said little about his mother's legacy, which Lord Leicester seems to have made conditional on himself being paid by Lord Strangford, thereby adding to the losses through his sister's ingratitude, mortgages on his property, etc.: "by all these means together I find myself destitute of all help at home, and exposed to all those troubles, inconveniences, and mischiefs unto which they are exposed who have nothing to subsist upon in a place far from home, where no assistance can possibly be expected, and where I am known to be of a quality which makes all low and mean ways of living shameful and detestable. These are parts of the evils with which I find myself encompassed, and out of which I see no issue; nor can I make one step that is not as likely to prove my destruction as preservation. It will not, I think, be thought strange that I am sensible of them, since he that is not must either be an angel or a beast. My only hope is, God will some way or another put an end to my troubles, or my life."

But this complaint was wrung from him by his father's neglect and unkindness. His mother's legacy his father had coolly called his "gift," and Sidney never received it. But throughout his letters he shows that he has such a strong affection for the old man that nothing seems to alter it, though at first he appears to doubt whether his letters will be acceptable, but he

thinks it his duty to continue writing till he is quite rejected. "I give your lordship this testimony of my being alive, which I think necessary, since your lordship gives me no sign of remembering I am so." He is continually looking for news of the kind to please his father; his letters are full of interest, and contain very little personal history and a great deal of news. He tries also to get a few choice books for the library at Penshurst, till at length he seems to have made some impression. Sidney receives no word of thanks, but he hears from friends that Lord Leicester is "not displeased" with his letters, which is evidently the only encouraging news he received by that day's post. He finds that Lord Leicester's state of health is some excuse for his not writing. But he does seem to have had a "crabbed old age." In noble return for "suspicions concerning me," which Sidney says he hears his father has had, Sidney, eventually as the "utmost act of resignation," gives up, as requested by Sir John Temple, into his father's hand "the best part of that poor fortune which he has in the world," the mortgaged lands, which he had yet the liberty of selling. He thus leaves himself absolutely dependent on Lord Leicester, though at his age, he says, "growing very near forty, and giving marks of declining by the colour of my hair, it is time that I may have something that I may call my own, out of which I may in rest have bread, when fortune hath taken from me all means of gaining it by my industry."

It is a pathetic story—this poverty of the proud

Sidney in the rich, luxurious city where he was so well known. Whether from want of means or from the heart-sickness which only finds society a mockery, Sidney determined to leave Rome.

There is just one little touch in the last of his letters which adds the final item to the indication of his depressing circumstances. "I am troubled with one of my ordinary fits of headache."

So he left the city about the end of May, having seen and heard much that was curious at an interesting time in Italian politics; but, after all, he had chosen that place as one in which he might "most certainly disentangle himself from all business."

He had tried to find distraction, but society is not enough for a working mind. It cannot rest without losing itself in some occupation. And in those days for a man of noble birth and scanty means, without a taste for war and with much for what was an expensive luxury, cultivated society—an absorbing interest was not easy to find.

But surely it might have been possible even for Sidney to have found leisure in Rome to study, if that were all he wanted? He speaks of libraries and gardens, why not have stayed in a place where he could have enjoyed them?

The passage in his "Apology" which refers to his coming to Rome may be entered here as giving his reasons for doing so, and as hinting at some trouble which has never been explained.

"Having finished, to the advantage of all Europe

and the honour of this nation, a negotiation upon which I had been employed in the north, I chose rather to remain beyond the seas than to return into my own country, though General Monk, upon the account of many obligations received from me, did desire me to return, with large offers of all the advantages he could procure for me.

"I well knew his power, and did not doubt of his intentions, but, through . . . . . grace, was able to reject the rewards of iniquity. It being acknowledged that though I had ever opposed the then triumphing party, no man had ever shewed himself to be a fairer enemy, and that I had done many personal and most important services, as well to the royal family as to such as depended upon it. I hoped that no man would search into my present thoughts, not so far as to remember my former actions as to disturb me in a most innocent exile; and, that the most malicious of my enemies should not pretend that I practised anything against the Government, I made Rome the place of my retreat—which was certainly an ill scene to act anything that was displeasing unto it.

"But I soon found that no inoffensiveness could preserve me against the malice of those who sought to destroy me, and was defended from those who designed to assassinate me, only by the charity of strangers."

So, many reasons may have been united to induce Sidney to make the change of residence and of habits which are next recorded. We only have had glimpses of his life, and they become fewer from this time.

CHAPTER VI.

A WANDERER. 1662—1676. ÆTAT. 40—54.

Remote, unfriended, melancholy, slow.
Goldsmith.

FRASCATI, or Franscati, was the place to which Sidney had chosen to retreat. There, in the glorious Italian sunshine, looking on a view, "the description of which would look more like poetry than truth," the wanderer found peace and solitude for a few months. The lovely *campagna* below, and the beautiful situation of his host's dwelling on the hills, reminded a Spanish lady of an enchanted scene. Only those who know what the spell of those Southern skies may be, can imagine how it soothed and calmed even the restless Sidney. Solitude and sunshine together have done that for many a sore heart which was too restless to bear society and sunshine. In the Villa di Belvedere, "one of the finest in Italy," Sidney may or may not have had the company of its princely and hospitable owner. He does not mention Pamphili, except his name; he probably was absent after the first few days. "Though," says Sidney, "my natural delight in solitude

is very much increased this last year, I cannot desire to be more alone than I am, and hope to continue. My conversation is with birds, trees, and books; in these last months that I have had no business at all, I have applied myself to study a little more than I have done formerly; and, though one who begins at my age cannot hope to make any considerable progress that way, I find so much satisfaction in it, that for the future I shall very unwillingly (though I had the opportunity) put myself into any way of living that shall deprive me of that entertainment."

In July, 1661, he speaks of himself with a touch of vivid description, "as a hermit in a palace." Evelyn had visited Frascati, and mentioning the Villa Aldobrandini, otherwise Belvedere, as "the most delicious place I ever beheld," remarks, as Sidney does, on the delightful walks, freshness of the air, and the exquisite view of the distant Roman hills, towards the Eternal City, lying fifteen miles below. But Frascati, near the classic Tusculanum, had the ancient, as well as the modern, memories of great men as its associations. Is it too fanciful to suppose that Cicero was one of the authors whom Sidney would read all the more attentively (as we all do interest ourselves in works in such circumstances), feeling that under the "Eternal Blue," he was looking down on almost the same scene that so long before had moved the great orator and the author of "The Republic" to admiration? Italy was a country where it was most possible to find examples of every kind of government, and if Sidney had not

the advantage of the succinct compilations which now reduce history to order, he was able to find many "raw materials" in the libraries to which he had access in "the motherland of learning." "I am with some eagerness fallen to reading, and find so much satisfaction in it, that though I every morning see the sun rise, I never go abroad till six or seven of the clock at night," which, unless he adopted the Italian custom of a *siesta*, allows very little time for sleep.

Sidney was happy here, and he was one of the last men to be unreasonably discontented, yet, in the self-conscious fashion which is inherent, and sometimes disagreeably inherent, in the intellectual life, he wonders why he is so. He almost apologises for it, as if he were ashamed of yielding to what is, to such natures, "the poetry of existence," a life of sunshine, and plenty of congenial study.

It seems very natural (showing how the power of being simply content with the present is gone, "with the old Pagan days," Hawthorne thinks) when we find that, evidently keenly appreciating the beauty around him, Algernon Sidney appears to wonder how he can do so, how he can be content to know "as little of the affairs of England as he does of China," and how he seems to care nothing for the future. He does not say so, but surely this is what may well be read between the lines of this account of himself.

"I cannot so unite my thoughts unto one object as absolutely to forbid the memory of these things" (his poverty, exile, and failure) "to enter into them; but I

go as far as I can; and since I cannot forget what is past, nor be absolutely insensible of what is present, I defend myself reasonably well from increasing or anticipating evils of foresight. The power of foreseeing is a happy quality unto those who prosper . . . but a most desperate mischief unto them who by foreseeing can discover nothing that is not worse than the evils they do already feel. He that is naked, alone, and without help in the open sea, is less unhappy in the night, when he may hope the land is near, than in the day, when he sees it is not, and there is no possibility of safety."

Here is the language of hopelessness, of the man who knows that all is in an evil case; but there follows the passage which may be interpreted both as the expression of one who is striving to endure, and as one who finds insensibly that it is not quite so hard as he thought it would be—a state of mind with which most people can sympathise.

"Perhaps short-sighted people might, in condition like unto mine, find more occasion of trouble than I do. I find stupidity an advantage; Nature hath given me a large proportion of it, and I did artificially increase it to that degree, that if I were not awakened with the bitter sense of some mischief that the Lady Strangford hath brought upon me (which Sir John Temple ever made me hope he would remove), I should rest well enough at ease in a dull indolence, and never trouble myself with the thoughts of examining where I should have bread for the next three months. This may show your lordship into what state nature and patience have brought

one that received life from you. I have not much to complain of (unless in that one point I mentioned), less to desire, and least of all to be pleased with."

"I intend this half-burial," he says a few days later, "as a preparative to an entire one, and shall not be much troubled though I find, if upon the knowledge of my manner of life, they who the last year at Whitehall did exercise their tongues upon me, as a very unruly-headed man, do so far change their opinion of me on the sudden, as to believe me so dull and lazy as to be fit for nothing. When that opinion is well settled, I may hope to live quietly in England."

He speaks of his plans and his hopes that after another year he may return home: "I have ever in my thoughts to choose that before anything," he writes.

Once more business matters are mentioned. Lord Leicester actually sent him some money (though it is not till July that Sir John Temple finally remonstrates upon his treatment of his son), who is most grateful for the kindness, and asks his father to accept some of the horses that were at his farm in the Fens, before all be gone.

One other gift he had sent to his father—a MS., by some said to be his own, in Italian. It was at least transcribed by himself.

He wrote for Sir Philip Sidney's picture to be sent to Penshurst from Germany, and promised to forward also his own; but it was not painted till after he went to Brussels in 1663. In every way he most thoroughly proved himself an affectionate son, and it must not be forgotten that his poverty to a certain extent proceeded from this willingness to submit to his father's wishes

where he might have claimed dues, and from his being too kind a brother.

Whether it were innate activity which did not suffer him to rest, or for the desire to be near home, he now returned to the North of Europe. It seemed that his actions were suspected in any case. He had found a resting-place on the lovely classic soil. He had known the power of intellectual absorption, a perfect anodyne for the time; for so long as health and the capacity for concentrated attention last, the student, as a student, cannot be utterly miserable.

The news from England continuing bad, it became a question of resistance once more.

He had the opportunity on his way home of at once observing the constitution of the Swiss Commonwealth, and visiting exiles, and one who, like Sidney, had been a soldier, a statesman, and an author; but, fortunately for himself, had an income which was large enough for those days. Edmund Ludlow had taken up his abode at Vevey, and here Sidney and he had long and anxious discussions about the state of affairs at home, and the position of the exiled Republican party in respect to the new and complicated developments of foreign politics. We come now to a part of history which seems strange to us in modern times. We cannot conceive how patriotic Englishmen could encourage the idea of an invasion of their country. The thought seems as unworthy as absurd.* We

* Yet we are told that in Scotland the thought of a Dutch invasion was preferred to Lauderdale's Government. See *Quarterly*, April, 1884.

cannot realise how the world divided itself into causes, not into nations, in those days. As in the sixteenth century, there had been "Protestant" and "Reformed" against the remodelled Romish Church; so, here, with a leaven of the religious animosities which affected nations, if not statesmen, quite as much as formerly, there was "Monarchy" against "Nationality," as the unit of government, just as, a little later, the world practically was—France against the European League.

We can scarcely complain of the system, since we have benefited by the result. The combination of the many weak who are in the right against the few powerful leaders, or rulers that singly could not be resisted, is a principle which every one approves of—in theory.

It is a curious illustration of this that the Swiss Cantons had taken a great interest in the English struggles for liberty. Lord Lisle, in 1649, had written to Lord Leicester that "the ministers there do publicly give God thanks for the establishment of the republic, and pray for it; upon which, I believe, an agent will be sent thither."

Evelyn, in his travels in 1645, writes: "I look upon this country to be the safest spot of all Europe; neither envied nor envying; nor are any of them rich nor poor; they live in great simplicity and tranquillity, and though of the fourteen cantons half be Roman Catholic, the rest Reformed, yet they mutually agree."

Colonel Sidney found himself therefore, for once,

warmly welcomed on account of his principles, which must have been a change to one who generally found them in the way of honour or advancement.

After leaving Ludlow, telling him that his views were unaltered, and that he was "drawing nearer home that he might not be wanting to his duty and the public service," Colonel Sidney made use of his name and power to help his friends. During the three weeks he spent at Vevey he had become perhaps more intimate with Ludlow than ever before, and therefore was glad to do him a service by speaking on his behalf to the magistrates at Berne. It was like him; in this case, however, the kindness was one which came from the head as well as from the heart. But had it been otherwise, it would still have been performed, for we know that, so far as Sidney's death depended on a cause external to politics in some degree, it was the result of too friendly help given to an unworthy man.

Sidney seems to have believed that he had secured Ludlow by the ties of party, gratitude, and friendship, to whatever schemes he thought best for the general good.

Now comes a portion of his life in which his movements and actions can be only traced with difficulty. If we are right in the view of his character so far sketched, there can be no doubt as to his motives.

In saying this, we have no wish to blind our eyes to the faults which were in Sidney; but there are laws of the spiritual life which must be borne in mind. There are vices and virtues which cannot flourish in certain

characters, unless most carefully and artificially cultivated, like exotics or even semi-hardy flowers in an unsuitable climate or soil. There are logical impossibilities even in our most illogical moods. Though occasionally a man may fall under a temptation which, not knowing the complexity of the circumstances, we think never could have any power over him, life has a dramatic unity of its own. Certain gifts, certain characteristics, are given to each; certain external objects have their special magnetic attraction for every soul; but the personal character, which is "not the whole of our destiny," cannot be altered in some, for, like matter, it may be transmuted, it cannot be increased. It may be developed or stunted; it may be polished, or left in such a state that its nature is almost unknown to itself; but the moral weight, the potential power of becoming, is the true Fate from which no hero can escape, though the sluggard and the coward may fail to secure even the smaller portion of life allotted to him.

So it is no fancy when we say that, to some natures, certain things are impossible. We can also calculate very justly on the actions of greater minds. We know that they are possessed by ideas of good, and that, so far as lies in their power, they will try to carry them out.

De Witt, Sidney's friend, "whose only artifice was silence," accounted for his prophetic insight into European politics by saying that he was in the habit of imagining what each State wanted for its own interest. The object seen, the means became clear. However Louis XIV., or Cromwell, or Philip IV., would strive to

divert his attention, he, like a skilful chess-player, looked to the end.

If we take Sidney's motives as simply inspired by pure patriotism, in all his wayward wanderings and hidden negotiations we shall acknowledge but the one end, and perhaps arrive at the justest conclusion. If not—if the argument from character has no weight—we have no clue whatever to the devious path he now followed. That such an abstract motive was his only guiding-star, that he had no personal ends to serve, that he sought for the approval of no man, and still pursued his dream of liberty and honour without hope of any reward for himself, may seem fantastic, but it was true. The cynic who says that all men are alike, might as well declare that he saw no distinction between the letters of the alphabet. Sidney might be compared to the knight-errant of romance, who had but one motive—his lady's safety and release from captivity, who sought aid wherever it might be found. And surely Algernon Sidney's life was quite as chivalric as that of his better-known relative, Sir Philip Sidney. Spenser gives us the clue to the different estimation in which the two men are held. He immortalised Sir Calidore as the Knight of Courtesy, in the "Faery Queen;" the charm of manner has again proved itself "something to every one, and everything to some." Algernon (though, after all, he had to live in more difficult times, and to live longer) never had that power over the affections which he had over the intellects of others. Where one was loved, the other was admired; one attracted where

the other was respected. Below the surface there was great kindness of heart; but we see very clearly the quick, proud manner, veiling "the sweetness of disposition" which was his in reality, which his friends would overlook, but which strangers could not always penetrate. That is why (in addition to the party quarrels which mythify those great men identified with any cause) Algernon Sidney does not stand in his rightful place in English hearts, as one greater even than Sir Philip Sidney. A simple intelligible action of self-denial has more weight with popular sympathies than long weary years of unselfish patriotism, in which the hardest part of the exile's lot was, that he might not work for his country, that he was thought to be her enemy, and that "the wicked were in such prosperity."

Apart from any prejudice, that was the description which is most applicable to the English Kingdom for nearly thirty years from 1660; and, though the Revolution of 1688 was a turning-point, it takes some time for ebb and flow to be perceptible. There were no men of any high principle in power. Southampton and Clarendon were merely respectable, and they were far too good for their times. There were good men. There were excessively able men. There were many statesmanlike workers, and theoretical, which afterwards became practical, constitutional reform. But we are glad that it does not lie within our present limits to describe the features of the English Restoration in much detail.

As Sidney went northward he found that the com-

plication in European matters had ripened during his retirement. The young King of France had taken all the cares of government upon himself. He worked eight hours a day at State affairs; he insisted on all ministers personally consulting him; he acted on Mazarin's words: "Si une fois vous prenez le gouvernail, vous ferez plus en un jour qu'un plus habile que moi en six mois; car c'est d'un autre poids ce qu'un roi fait de droit fil que ce que fait un ministre, quelque autorisé qu'il puisse être."*

The extraordinary vigour which characterised the first years of the personal administration of Louis XIV. proved the truth of this remark. In France, Sidney saw an example of the brilliancy of despotic rule. When he was at Rome he had met a "Mr. Colbert," who had come upon some business from the King of France. Young Cardinal Chigi, who received "Mr. Colbert" very coldly in 1661, had to go and apologise most humbly on behalf of Alexander VII. in 1664, for insults offered to the French Ambassador by the *sbirri*. This was only one of the many ways in which the Most Christian King asserted a most successful and vigorous foreign policy, while under him, the "Mr. Colbert" who was so slightly honoured in Rome (but three years older than Sidney, had been the favourite pupil of Mazarin) raised the French revenue from a

* "As soon as you place yourself at the helm, you will do more in one day than any man with more skill than I have in six months; for there is a different force in what a king does from himself, and what a minister may do, whatever authority be given him."

deficit of twenty-eight million francs in 1661, to eighty-nine million francs nett in 1683; arts, manufactures, agriculture, war, internal and external administration, all had the care of the statesmanlike King and his able servants, among whom he was the ablest man. It was true that this forcing of the bloom of the kingdom left the nation exhausted, and that the King himself, for whom the title of "Le Grand" was thought too poor, worn out by the burden of royalty, would say one day to his old servant: "There is no pleasure in living at our age;" but, for the moment, the daily increasing splendour of his administration would at once show the strongest arguments in favour of a despotic central rule under a single head, and prove a menace to the rest of Europe.

Sidney obtained a passport from the French Government, and after a few days' stay at Vincennes, went to Flanders. That country was in the happy position of being the centre of European intrigue, not because of its power, but because of its helpless riches. It may be recalled that Mrs. Aphra Behn was one of the spies, male and female, who clustered round the various envoys at Brussels. France meant to have Flanders. It was against English interests—the interests which a nation can always perceive—to let France have it. It had always been so, since the days when Edward III. was the "Woolmaster," and it would be so till long after the policies of Charles II. and Louis XIV. had crumbled away. It was as well that Englishmen had an intelligible reason for resisting the encroachments of France, for

Charles II. had every reason to encourage them. Louis, who as a boy had pranced into his Parliament (1655) declaring that he knew all about the evils which such assemblies produced, and wanted no more, was most willing to help Charles, if Charles would help him. The English Parliament, representing the nation in spirit (however corrupt and politically ignorant its members individually might be), was dangerous to Charles because it checked his schemes for increasing the kingly power; and to Louis, because it might drive England into resisting his plans for acquiring the Empire of the West. It was not till later that the English King wrote: "I and my brother only are of your party;" but in early days, he said: "The greatest obstacle to the French alliance is the care which France now takes to make for itself a commercial market, and to be an imposing maritime Power. Every step that France takes in this direction perpetuates the jealousy between the two nations."

Flanders, as marked by Louis for his prey, was therefore trembling for its own fate, and agitated by the international jealousies and partisans of every scheme and nation, when Sidney arrived there in 1664. Would Louis claim the Netherlands in right of his wife, as against the young Spanish Infant, her younger step-brother? In private affairs in Flanders, children of a second marriage had their rights subordinated to those of the first. But the right of "devolution" was a small matter to Louis. It gave him a pretext for evolution of his schemes.

The nations interested in preventing this claim (which rested on might rather than on the right Louis pretended, as every one knew) were Holland, England, and the Protestant Princes of Germany. If the two first could be made to fight with each other the course of Louis was clear. Such were the ideas in political circles in Flanders when Sidney reached Brussels. Sidney made a last effort to return home. He asked to be allowed to remain quietly at Penshurst; this being refused, he fulfilled his promise to his father and had his portrait painted by Julius van Egmont, preparatory to undertaking a dangerous quest.

This picture has been justly praised, and was, at the time, considered an excellent likeness. To us it has remarkable force still. It is, we feel, Algernon Sidney, the proud, unfortunate, dignified man, not soured by misfortune, but deeply touched with melancholy. It is a living portrait, and would certainly attract any student of character who saw it, to ask the history of a man whose face betokened such a sensitive nature endued with great powers, before it was known that it is the portrait of one who has been misrepresented nearly as much by his friends as by his enemies. It is still at Penshurst; though the title of the Earldom of Leicester has passed from the place, Lord de L'Isle, who inherits from the female line, the male branch having become extinct, has the old associations to be proud of, and need not care if a new line (that of the Cokes) has appropriated the name of the father of Algernon Sidney.

The relations between Sidney and his father seem

to have been restored to a friendly footing. The last of the "Strangford" business was, that by the bill which enabled the trustees of Lord Strangford to sell lands for the payment of his debts, and which was passed in the House of Commons, May 10, 1664, a "proviso was made on behalf of Algernon Sidney." In the meantime he "was not in a condition to refuse good employment," he writes.

In 1664 the Turks threatened Vienna. Six thousand men were sent from Paris to Montecuculi, the Imperial General, and had their part in the victory at S. Gothard, which obtained "the twenty years' truce" for Austria. The greater part of Hungary still remained in Turkish hands. This, and the siege of Candia, were perhaps the only occasions on which Louis aided the Christian Power in the East—he was nicknamed the Most Christian Turk. But though he made an exception to his rule, it is easy to see the reason. Leopold IV., as head of the Austrian House, might be a rival, but his country was the moral breakwater for the whole of Europe. "If," says Sir W. Temple, "the Turks had possessed this bulwark of Christendom (Vienna), I do not conceive what could have hindered them from being masters immediately of Italy and all its depending provinces; nor, in another year, of all Italy or of the southern provinces of Germany, as they should have chosen to carry on their invasion, or of both in two or three years' time; and how fatal this might have been to the rest of Christendom, or how it might have enlarged the Turkish dominions, is easy to conjecture."

But for England the old motive was sufficient—that which had worked upon Henry IV.—to get the high-spirited out of the way. When Sidney was asked to lead off a company of those who would serve the Emperor, he at first refused; then supposing that there was more in the proposal than met the eye, he declares in so many words that if it suit him he would help those in power in England. "They shall have their end: I will serve them in it, if they please, and upon more easy terms than will be expected by others. I will undertake to transport a good strong body of the best officers and soldiers of our old army, with horse and foot."

Scornfully asserting that though it might be an advantage to himself and friends, Sidney says he knows that it is to help himself that the King wishes to get rid of suspected people. But it cannot be expected "that they will of their own accord leave the country unless it be with some man of whom they have a good opinion—and all these are as little favoured as I am."

Lord Leicester is, therefore, to see what there really is in the scheme, and to ask Lord Sunderland about it. Lord Sunderland was Sidney's nephew, but—in favour at Court.

"If it be granted, it is well, and I hope to carry those who will gain honour unto the nation wherever they go, and either find honour for themselves, or graces,* which

* Is this an error for *graves?* or does it mean simply *reputation?* The former would be more like Sidney.

is as good, and it will be very suitable to my intention, who, as I told you in a letter about three weeks since, have thought of passing the next summer as a volunteer in Hungary.

"I doubt your lordship will be unwilling to propose this, lest it should make the King or his ministers believe that I am upon better terms with my old companions than you would have them think me. I desire your lordship to waive that scruple. I have credit enough with them for such a business as this is; and if I were not thought at Court to have far more than I have they would not trouble themselves with me so much as they do.

"Whatever it is, I desire to make use of it to carry me, and a good number of those in the same condition, so far from England that those who hate us may give over suspecting us."

Sidney was now forty-one. What military genius he may have had can never be known. One thing he evidently possessed, and was aware that he did possess it—the power of commanding others.

But the scheme fell through.

It had shown the English Government what Sidney was and what powers he had. Perhaps this was all that was wanted.

The next steps may be given in the words of his apology: "When the care of my private affairs brought me into Flanders and Holland, anno 1663, the same dangers" (assassination) "accompanied me; and that no place might be safe unto me, Andrew White, with

some others, were sent into the most remote parts of Germany to murther me."

This referred to a very narrow escape at Augsburg in 1664, the year in which John Lisle was stabbed coming out of church in Switzerland. But this was not the only kind of persecution he had to endure.

This is what he says, and the reason he supposed was found for the position in which he was placed.

"The asperity of this persecution obliged me to seek the protection of some foreign princes, and, being then in the strength of my age, had reputation enough to have gained honourable employment; but all my designs were broken by letters and messages from this (the English) Court so as none durst entertain me; and when I could not comprehend the grounds of dealing with me in such a way, when I knew that many others, who had been my companions, and given, as I thought, most just causes of hatred against them, were received into favour and suffered to live quietly, a man of quality, who well knew the temper of the Court, explained this misery unto me by letting me know that I was distinguished from the rest because it was known that I could not be corrupted."

"No man could have thought it strange if this had cast me into the utmost extremities; and, perhaps, occasions of being revenged would not have been wanting if I had sought them."

In 1665 Louis had his wish. War broke out between Holland and England. Pepys, talking to a friend, says: "Mighty little reason there is for all this." There was

a mighty great reason, however, had he but known it—the will of France.

In Holland, John de Witt was still at the head of affairs. To him some of the English emigrants addressed themselves. Burnet's account is: "Algernon Sidney and some others of the Commonwealth party, came to De Witt, and pressed him to think of an invasion of England and Scotland, and gave him great assurances of a strong party. . . . But de Witt was against it."

But we doubt whether Sidney's opinion was greatly in favour of it, or whether his name was not taken as representing the leading Republicans. Though afterwards he differed with Ludlow, he had agreed to his maxims (since quoted with approval by Charles Fox), that it can never be right to take desperate measures, unless to having a just cause some reasonable prospect of success may be added.

This caution made Ludlow retreat from Sidney's schemes with Louis XIV. Louis, to widen the breach between England and Holland, had assisted the latter in the Dutch war, and now appeared ready to negotiate with the English Republicans. Sidney asked for 100,000 crowns as the nucleus of a fund for invasion. Here again it seems to have been an endeavour on the part of one interested to discover the strength of the exiles: "Sur ces différentes pensées j'écoutai les propositions qui me furent faites par M. Sidney, gentilhomme Anglais, lequel me promettait de faire éclater dans peu quelque soulèvement, en lui faisant fournir cent mille écus; mais je trouvai la somme un peu trop

forte pour l'exposer ainsi sur la foi d'un fugitif; à moins de voir quelque disposition aux choses qu'il me faisait attendre. C'est pourquoi je lui offris de donner seulement vingt mille écus comptant, avec promesses d'envoyer après aux soulevés tout le secours qui leur serait nécessaire, aussitôt qu'ils paraîtraient en état de s'en pouvoir servir avec succès." * (1666.)

The power of England had sunk low indeed in that terrible year in which she suffered so much; but it was hopeless to expect the people of England to turn out yet another Government. A man told Pepys that he had served under eight in one year, and though that was the year before the Restoration (which was to have been so brilliant a success, and certainly was not), nobody was then prepared for another fundamental change. The King jested, and the people grumbled; but the former intended to stay in England, and the latter did not seriously think it possible that he could be turned out again;† and so, though if success had been possible, Sidney would, perhaps, not have done so, he says: "I cast myself into unsuspected retirement in the most

* "Thinking thus of the matter, I listened to the proposals which were made to me by Mr. Sidney, an English gentleman, who promised me to undertake that a rising should be made if I would give him a hundred thousand crowns; but I thought the sum a little too much to risk thus on the faith of an exile, at least till I saw some chance of the things he expected. That is why I offered to give him only twenty thousand crowns down, and promised to send afterwards to the rebels all the help that they might need as soon as they should appear likely to be able to use it with advantage."

† Civil war was, however, a possibility on several occasions.

remote part of France, where I passed about eleven years."

That is practically all we know of his life from 1665 till 1676. Meadley made the most painstaking researches in the early years of this century for materials for this part of the life, as told in his memoirs, and could find nothing. Nor have—those which he also looked for—"Sidney's letters to his uncle, the Earl of Northumberland, or those successively addressed to Sir John and Sir William Temple," yet come to light, so far as we are aware. It is to be hoped that some day they may be discovered, as packets lost as long have been found before now. Sir William Temple was the younger son of Sir John Temple, who had so often befriended Sidney in his family quarrels. There seems to have been mutual respect and some intimacy between the two men; but, as appears from later letters, no very strong personal liking, and much difference of opinion. Sidney was "too visionary" for Temple; Temple's "mysteries," though he was as straightforward as diplomatist could be, irritated Sidney. But then he was annoyed with many things besides, and his exile certainly had embittered him.

The French war with Flanders began in the same year that peace was made between England and Holland at Breda (1667); but the Triple Alliance was concluded the following year. This was, as all know, the work of Sir William Temple and John de Witt, and has been celebrated as "the most important piece of diplomacy executed in the shortest possible time." By it,

with the thorough approval of the English nation, Sweden, Holland, and England were leagued together to resist the encroachments of France. Charles and Louis let the diplomatists do as they liked, and, by their own power quietly and secretly undid the work—unknown to nearly every one—by the Treaty of Dover (1670), which may be described here simply as the entire surrender of Charles to Louis. He submitted "in will," as the legends of the saints say; but he had only the whole of the English nation against him, so that his "deed" was not quite perfect. The sister of Charles, and the Duchess of Orleans, the beautiful Henrietta, aged twenty-six, was the messenger chosen between the two kings. She fulfilled her work and died suddenly, as she returned to Paris. Several people had an interest in her death, but her husband was suspected. Bossuet preached an eloquent sermon at St. Denis. His text was, most appropriately, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity;" and, in it, his allusion to her intelligence, her capacity for State affairs, her powers of secrecy, must have fallen on very attentive ears. Nor did he fail to say that the latter point was one which had caused her to be trusted with important State secrets, though he, as a preacher, did not wish to imitate "speculative politicians who composed the annals of their own times without instructions."

Sidney was in Paris at the time, and there is no doubt that what he heard there was the cause of his opposition to aid being granted to the English King under pretence of making war with France. He was one of the first to announce publicly that the King's

open sayings were "a juggle." He knew that the two Courts understood each other.

His presence in Paris became known to Charles, who at first said he did not care whether Sidney were in Paris or in Languedoc, provided he did not return to England, but afterwards changed his mind, and declared that he could not go too far away; perhaps this is as striking a testimony to Sidney as any that was ever given. Charles had just concluded an alliance with Louis; that these two, who might be said to represent the rulers of the world, should trouble themselves about an exile, like the one who came up to Paris to hear what was going on, seems almost incredible. "Il est homme de cœur et d'esprit,"* said Charles; but he did not wish him to adorn the English Court. Bennett, now Lord Arlington, proposed that the French King should allow him a pension. It was not paid, so far as any one knows, but had it been, it would not have been an unusual proceeding. We must not let our prejudices in favour of England and freedom make us forget that Louis did really work for the good of his people. The greatest argument against despotic power is that it overburdens a king who tries to do this. "C'est par le travail on régne; qu'il y a de l'ingratitude et de l'audace à l'égard de Dieu, de l'injustice et de la tyrannie à l'égard des hommes, de vouloir l'un sans l'autre,"† he wrote for his son's benefit. When we find our "Heaven-sent ruler," he is killed with overwork.

* "He is a man of feeling and of wit—of heart and head."

† "It is by work we reign; it is ungrateful and audacious to GOD, and unjust and tyrannous towards men, to wish to reign without working."

Among his good deeds Louis never failed to encourage men of letters. In one year he spent 53,000 livres in pensions for literary men in France, and gave 16,000 to foreigners. "Quoique le roi ne soit pas votre souverain," leur ecrivait Colbert, "il veut être votre bienfaiteur; il m'a commandé de vous envoyer la lettre de change ci-jointe, comme un gage de son estime." *

We think, therefore, that though Arlington may have hoped that a French pension might dishonour Sidney (placing him thus on a different footing to his royal master and himself, who apparently did not consider themselves capable of dishonour in the same way), it would have been by no means an extraordinary thing had Sidney received it. But, unfortunately for his comfort, though, to our modern notions, not for his reputation, it does not seem to have been paid. All we can say is, that he found a refuge on French soil. A story is told, which is rather characteristic and may be true, that hunting with the King at Vincennes, he rode a horse which His Majesty admired and wished to buy. Sidney refused to sell it, perhaps out of a wish to show his independence. Finding that it was to be taken from him by force (as would have been the case when a superior desired to possess himself of his poorer neighbour's property), Sidney took a pistol and shot the animal, saying that it "should not be mastered by a king of slaves."

* "Though the king be not your sovereign," Colbert wrote to them, "he would gladly be your benefactor; therefore he has commanded me to enclose this letter of credit, as a mark of his esteem."

This may seem a piece of needless bravado ; but a man of Sidney's temper would naturally be glad of an excuse to show openly his condemnation of principles which no others—subjects of the French king—dare resent. It is extremely hard for us to realise the actual state of life under an absolute monarchy; could we do so, we should have no difficulty in understanding that the story might well be true, and the deed worthy of approbation. There was the quick death of the noble animal, and a text was given for discussions, which, though utterly futile, would not be the less interesting, because they might not be agreeable to and would be unheard by the ears of Louis le Grand.

Sidney again retired into obscurity. In 1672 he would hear of the death of his friend John de Witt ; their late differences would be cancelled by his death. Popular anger had been great against his brother, and when Cornelius was banished, after torture and imprisonment, John took him out of the Hague in his own carriage, the mob, instigated, it is said, by those who were in the confidence of the Prince of Orange, set upon the great Pensioner, and murdered him. We quote the words of Fox: "The catastrophe of De Witt, the wisest, best, and most truly patriotic minister that ever appeared upon the public stage, as it was an act of the most crying injustice and ingratitude, so likewise is it the most completely discouraging example that history affords to the lovers of liberty." And, "With De Witt fell also his cause and his party."

When Sidney received this news he could not tell

that the Prince of Orange should do what De Witt had not done, would secure the liberties of Europe, and that his own dearly-loved country would eventually benefit by the very man whose party had at all events encouraged this popular murder.

It must have been a dark hour for Sidney when he heard that the great John de Witt was no more, if,—even a century later, to Fox it appeared such a real blow to the cause of liberty. But darker times were to follow.

We do not know what Sidney's occupations were at this time; but, as every biographer has remarked, this must have been the period in which he accumulated his wonderful stores of learning, which made Burnet say of him, "He hath studied the history of government more than any man I ever knew."

The ten years of silence wore away, and when Sidney was four-and-fifty, and his father over fourscore, their longings were at last allowed to be gratified. And so Sidney returned to England in 1677.

CHAPTER VII.

ENGLISH POLITICS. 1676—1680. ÆTAT. 54—58.

Whereas, in the beginning, I cut off history from our study as a useless part, as certainly it is where it is read only as a tale that is told ; here, on the other hand, I recommend it, to one who hath well settled in his mind the principles of morality, and knows how to make a judgment on the actions of men, as one of the most useful things he can apply to. . . . There he shall see the rise of opinions, and find from what slight and sometimes shameful occasions some of them have taken their rise, which yet afterwards have . . . passed almost for sacred in the world.—*Locke.*

"IN the most remote part of France I passed eleven years, and was drawn out of it only by a desire of seeing my aged father before he died."

Henry Savile was the younger brother of George, Lord Halifax—"the trimmer by principle." Henry Sidney had been in the household of the Duchess of York at the same time as Savile,* who aided considerably in procuring Algernon Sidney's passport into England. Lord Sunderland had been endeavouring to obtain it on the English side, at his grandfather's urgent wish, and

* Afterwards English Ambassador at Paris, in succession to Montague, enemy of Danby.

the King could no longer find a pretext for banishing a man who had never been found guilty of any crime. It is difficult to see what gratitude Sidney owed to Charles for permitting him to return, though Hume supposed he did. It may be better asked why he was kept away, for only by a judicial sentence is it in the power of any Government to prevent a man from, to say the least, taking his chance of arrest on his native soil. But Sidney was ever ready to be grateful where there was cause for it. In 1676 the exile went to Paris, and hoped that he might have been allowed to return to England; but, after seeing Savile personally, he waited to hear from him for some time. No letter came from England, and he returned to Nerac. Savile, once in London, had apparently forgotten him. His dying father might not live long enough for him to return. It seemed impossible that he should see him again alive. The long journey back to the South of France must have been one of much discontent and disappointment. We can almost imagine Sidney saying to himself: "No good thing can happen to me. Fate is against me."

He would go by the long roads which they were making and mending in every direction, and see tokens of various signs of coming trade and prosperity throughout France. The people indeed grumbled, but there were signs that a firm rule was over them, acting as it thought best. The Canal of the Two Seas was being constructed as he reached the province of Languedoc. From 10,000 to 12,000 workmen were employed from 1664 to 1681, working under Riquet, from the designs of

Andréossy, making the canal from Toulouse to Cette. By which route Sidney went back to the district which passed for his "home" we do not know.

We do know that he reflected upon the condition of the French people, for no less than five passages in his "Discourses" testify to it. He gave the state of France as an example of splendid misery. While Sir William Temple dwells on its natural products and capabilities, Sidney thinks of the "poor slaves," as the people have been made. He witnessed with his own eyes the oppression in the country. He speaks afterwards of those who talked of the glory of their master; "perhaps there were more of true glory in the steadiness of a little common-sense, than in all the vanities and whimsies their heads are full of," he observes drily.

In Paris he would hear the news from England of the fall of Clarendon and the rise of the Cabal—how, not a single person, man or woman, dared to rely on Charles or put any confidence in his friendship; that a country party was forming; that the Declaration of Indulgence had provoked the nation; how Danby had endeavoured to create a new Church and State party, loyal to the King; but, as was known in Paris, and suspected in England, the King certainly was working against his Parliament with Louis, and that he was inclined to the Romish Church, if he had not joined it; how the Declaration was recalled, Clifford and the Duke of York resigning their offices, after the Test Act was passed; and how Shaftesbury placed himself at the head of the country party, and pressed for a war with France. It

was not known then whether Danby would succeed or fail.

Such were the subjects for meditation which Sidney had acquired to think over in his retirement, which it must have seemed to him was to be prolonged for all his life.

But "ill-luck" appears to follow some men, unlucky in ambitions, unlucky throughout. After all, Savile had written from England; three letters were sent to Sidney at once, and when the wanderer got back to Nerac he found that he might have spared his three weeks' journey of four hundred leagues across France. He writes to thank Savile very pathetically. Speaking of his journey, which the earlier reception of the mis-sent letter would have saved, "This," he says naturally, "would have been a convenience unto me; but my obligation unto you is the same, and I so far acknowledge it to be the greatest that I have in a long time received from any man, as not to value the leave you have obtained for me to return into my country, after so long an absence, at a lower rate than the saving of my life."

Is not this, in a very few words, the summary of the long thoughts of an exile who has suffered? The whole tone of this letter is inexpressibly touching to one who realises the character of the writer—changed, but the same. He is no longer hopeful or ambitious.

> Mon cœur lasse de tout, même de l'espérance,
> N'ira plus de ses vœux importuner le sort;
> Prêtez-moi seulement, vallon de mon enfance,
> Un asile d'un jour pour attendre la mort.

The sentiment of Lamartine's song might describe his feelings; but though the country is very beautiful in what was then Gascony, Nature had not satisfied Sidney. He had found such consolation as he might in his books and pen, not for publication (he did not, we are convinced, write the "View of Government"), and from his seclusion, probably complete, since the French provinces had few who could be the companions of an intellectual man, he emerged without a wish to enter again on the field of political strife.

"You having proceeded thus far," he continues to Savile, "I will, without any scruple, put myself entirely upon the King's word; and desire you only to obtain a pass to signify it, and that His Majesty is pleased to send for me; so that the officers of the ports or other places may not stop me, as they will be apt to do as soon as they know my name, if I have not that for my protection.

"You took that which hath passed between you and me so rightly that I have nothing to add unto it. I have no other business than what solely concerns my person and family. I desire not to be a day in England unknown to the King or his ministers, and will lose no time in waiting upon the Secretary as soon as I can after my arrival.

"I think it no ways reasonable that I should stay in England, if the King do not see that I may do it without any shadow or possibility of prejudice unto him; and, unless I can satisfy him on that point, I desire no more than to return on this side the seas after the three

months, without thinking any more of living in England. You see my thoughts simply exposed. I beseech you to accomplish the work you have so well begun. Send your answer to M. du Moulins,* and believe no man in the world can be more obliged unto you than your most humble and obedient servant."

The letter is merely dated Nerac, December $\frac{18}{28}$, but, as Hollis and Meadley agree, the year placed upon it by another hand (1682) is quite wrong. It must be 1676.† It was written six months before his return to England in 1677.

He found his father alive, and as he arrived in August or September, and Lord Leicester did not die till the 2nd of November, perhaps the misunderstanding was removed, and the old man of eighty-two was able to know that, after all, Algernon was the worthiest of his four sons.

But after his father's death family quarrels began again. "My father died within a few weeks after my coming over; and when I prepared myself to return into Gascony, there to pass the remaining part of my life, I was hindered by the Earl of Leicester, my brother, who questioned all that my father had given me for my subsistence, and by a long and tedious suit in Chancery, detained me in England until I was made a prisoner."

* A man of somewhat unsettled principles, whom Sidney only vouches for as faithful to himself, apparently on a remonstrance from Savile, through whom letters were sent into Gascony a little later.

† Or 1675, if Hollis be right in placing his return a year before his father's death; but he is not.

Had Sidney been on better terms with his family, or the remedy less irksome, one might have supposed it a pretext to give him good reason for remaining in England, prolonging the private business on which he came over, till it should be shown how inoffensive his conduct was. But it is scarcely likely in this case, for Sidney was not warmly welcomed by his family; they seem to have been terribly afraid that he would compromise them. Robert Sidney made no figure in politics, but something in scandal; Henry Sidney in both; and Philip, Earl of Leicester, as we know, belonged now to the older generation. Lord Sunderland, the nephew of these four sons of Lord Leicester, son of Dorothy ("Saccharissa"), was characteristically the most prominent member of the family in politics. He was formed by, and was typical of, his own age.

Sidney, having received his undisputed legacy of £5,100 from the executors of his father's will (his nephew, his brother, and Sir John Pelham), waited for the result of the Chancery suit; he therefore obtained an extension of his leave to remain in England.

He had been absent since July, 1659. In these eighteen years a remarkable change had come over the face of the country. Even the Cavaliers, as Shaftesbury remarked, "were past their vice." But a new generation had sprung up of whom this could not be said; the question was whether "virtue was past." Apparently it was in the Court, but not in England itself.

Much has been said of the pathos of the blind Milton, fallen on evil days, who had published "Paradise

Lost" in 1667, and "Paradise Regained" and "Samson Agonistes" in 1671, and died on the 8th November, 1674, the "representative of Puritanism in its strength and in its weakness, in its unsuitability to a workaday world, and in its foundation on some of the best principles of our nature." But when we think of Algernon Sidney returned from his "half burial," his temper a little spoiled by his misfortunes, his sensitiveness increased by ill-success, but withal his patriotism as pure as ever, his only hope that "the cause should prosper, though not by him," we say that here also was one who deserved pitying respect. The men who were to make the cause prosper, the means they were to use, and the ends they wanted, were repugnant to him. He moved among a crowd of younger men, who looked on the last great survivor of the most purely political movement of the age with respect due to his age and temper, but not in the least comprehending his aims. His thoughts seemed to move in a wider circle than theirs. He was to them, though they knew it not, the man of understanding, who will only interfere in politics in his own city—that "which is confined to the region of speculation; for I do not believe it is to be found anywhere on earth." It seems to us as if Sidney had "lost touch" with the world, that he was not "in the swing" of the movement, that he became unpractical, till we remark again how very clearly he gauged men and movements, looking on them with keen insight, and from a very advanced point of view. Sometimes he was mistaken in measures, very rarely, we believe, in men.

His friends are of every kind. One thing he required of them, that they should have, or assume to have, ideas of popular freedom.

All are men who failed in their own time, but whose principles seem so commonplace to us, though even last century they were far from being accepted as platitudes, that we can scarcely understand the strength or weakness of the first who held them. To us it appears as if there could be no strength or activity required to stand still, simply to maintain ground. But those men were like strong swimmers. Their force was shown in their not being carried away by a current, whose sweep could only be estimated by those who were in it.

It is clear that whatever may have been the plots and plans of the Court, and the corruption of the Parliament, in whatever way we look upon the excited state of the nation, there were two elements of a purely intellectual kind to be considered. These are what touched Sidney's life.

The first was Charles, who had the highest kind of worldly ability, the power of hiding it. It is hard to conceive why we should so long have been content to accept him as a man "who never did a wise thing." He did, from his own point of view, many extremely sagacious acts. He was the cleverest King that ever sat on the throne of England. The proof of this lies in the deepest disgraces of his reign—his intrigues with Louis, and his victory, single-handed, over his own people. It was no mean ability that secured the triumphant success of the Crown in the years before his

death. Charles was a "cheap cynic" on a grand scale, too able to disbelieve in all virtue, as has been said, but able to calculate its exact power of resistance. "He would be the man of his people." Yes; as an angler plays with the fish he seeks eventually to land, so he would humour their strong desires. Ministers might fall, projects be cast aside, constitutional reforms might be pressed on to the "greatest theoretical point of perfection," Charles (with but two lastingly vulnerable points of personal attachment) went his own way, seeing billow after billow of anger roll in, but fixed in his determination to reach his own harbour.

It was no light matter to work with men as unscrupulous as he was himself, and to maintain his superiority over them in worldly wisdom, wit, and wickedness. The intellectual weight of Charles II. can scarcely therefore be over-estimated, though his "sauntering," his pleasures, and the ease with which he penetrated into policy and politics, utterly deceived many who were even able to guess that "Bennett's grave looks were a pretence." Disliking Charles Stuart—his person and his politics—we have every pleasure in giving him—a Mephistopheles as usual, in the garb and morals and manners of his age—his most undoubted due.

The second intellectual force was that which tried to look to the future, to see their adversary's game; but it was too scientific to be popular. The leaders of the country party were by no means generally pure in character or motive. Buckingham, perhaps the one man whose right to claim the prize no one would have

disputed, had one been offered for wickedness, however many the qualified candidates might have been who entered; Lord Cavendish, whose principles were much the same as those of Shaftesbury, though his abilities were far inferior; Shaftesbury, who clothed his capacity in the garments which the fashion of the day approved of, and many lesser spirits, were almost as discreditable in their opposition as the Court in its authority. Shaftesbury played a splendid game, and he and Danby gave the Crown a mortal hurt which it never recovered from. The Crown won its supremacy like a duellist, who, killing his adversary, comes off with a trifling scratch, which after a time causes the victor's death. Behind these came the moderate men, with some notions of political morality: Essex, whose devotion to the popular cause had been ripened by his visit to Denmark, in which he had seen how quickly liberty had been destroyed: Halifax, the "trimmer," whose justification lies in his own explanation of his nickname, one who ballasts a boat rightly instead of always leaning to one side; and Lord Russell, a man of character and some abilities, whose principles seemed to have been quickened into life, as his story gains in dramatic interest, by his marriage with Lady Vaughan, daughter of that Earl of Southampton who died shortly before Sidney's return to England. She was the first cousin of the French Ambassador Ruvigny, who had been recalled, because, being a Protestant, he would not exercise his privilege of having a Romanist chapel for the Papists, English and foreign, but who maintained his connection with the

French party in England. Lady Shaftesbury was a cousin of hers also. Lord Sunderland was Sidney's nephew. Thus this knot of men in the centre of the country party were linked together. We have not mentioned nearly all the names of note among them, some no less infamous than those of others in the Court party; while others, their actions hybridised by bribery, belonged to both, their so-called principles being with one and their votes with the other, sometimes finessing by agreement. Behind these was the nation, angry, confused, in fear of it knew not what, not comprehending the danger to liberty, but very much in earnest about the danger to religion.

Sidney's resolution to live in retirement gave way. Not to be governed by worse men than themselves is supposed to be the motive which calls philosophers to enter the arena of political strife. Lady Vaughan had inspired Lord Russell, for he never did much before she influenced him; it was "no time for honest men to live in retirement," though, like Sir William Temple when his schemes failed, they might be glad enough to do so.

The "Cavalier" Parliament was dissolved on the 24th of January, 1679. It had lasted since 1660, during which some most remarkable changes had gone on. Its enthusiastic loyalty had long been turned into bitterness. Minister after minister had handled it, and fallen between a King who worked over the heads of his most confidential advisers and a Parliament who found that, though the Crown did not trust its ministers, it corrupted them. Danby had accomplished the marriage of

the daughter of James to William of Orange, but he fell before a storm of indignation which he was at once too guilty and too innocent to face. The treaty of Nimeguen, as Green says, "not only left France the arbiter of Europe, but it left Charles the master of a force of 20,000 men levied for the war he refused to declare, and with nearly a million of French money in his pocket."

In that sentence lies the justification of Algernon Sidney's words on his return from France. They called him a pensioner of France; said he wished to play the game of France, by disposing his party to withdraw from pressing for a war. We know now that, as a matter of fact, Charles played off his Parliament against Louis, as a tramp might ask higher terms for holding back his own dog from flying at his superior's throat. Charles wished his Parliament to be only one degree short of unmanageable. Algernon Sidney, who knew what was said in Paris about the English King's suspected conversion, who looked on politics from an eminence, from which he soon descended to be almost lost in the busy throng, would have relaxed the opposition, that the plan might suddenly fall to the ground. Besides, he knew the French power, knew of her splendid armies (though Turenne was killed, and Condé, wanting a rival who could appreciate him, had retired), knew of her famous generals, her fast increasing navy. The time had gone by when England could stand alone against France. And in Holland, the Prince of Orange was no friend of Sidney's. He looked on him as the murderer of John de Witt. We know the future of that Prince of Orange.

No one in England could have foretold anything like it, though from the time of his marriage with Mary of York he was always considered the successor *in posse* of the Stuarts. To us, as to Fox, "the Prince of Orange's struggles in defence of his country, his success in rescuing it from a situation to all appearances so desperate, and the consequent failure and mortification of Louis XIV., form a scene in history upon which the mind dwells with increasing delight." We have great sympathy with the man, who said there was one way to prevent seeing the ruin of his country, "to die in the last ditch."

We think now, with our knowledge of the history of the next thirty years, that Sidney, who certainly knew more about the state of Europe than any one, might have recognised the man fitted to deliver Europe from its incubus; and are surprised when he failed to be more far-seeing than people usually are in these cases, and let his knowledge of the politics of the States-General blind his eyes to the fact that the saviour of his country would no longer be the *protégé* of Amsterdam, but the hero of Holland. Then it was not so. Sidney may have made a mistake as regards the Dutch Alliance; he made none as regarded trying to stop the pressure for war.

Hallam says: "The whole of Sidney's conduct is inconsistent with his having possessed either practical good sense or a just appreciation of the public interests; and his influence over the Whig party appears to have been entirely mischievous." In support of this assertion —or rather, supported by this assertion, which itself requires proof—Mr. Hallam thinks that Sidney was bent

on establishing his ideal of a Commonwealth—his "darling Commonwealth"—and that he had a "blind partiality to France." We shall leave these statements to answer themselves, opposing to them indirectly only the true description of Sidney's Commonwealth, in the last chapter of this book, when we examine his "Discourses on Government," and the statement of his actions in the years 1679–83. As the House of Commons then listened to Sir W. Coventry without ever questioning what he said, so we do Algernon Sidney the same bare justice, and believe his word. He may reserve facts or mistake their inferences, he is never wilfully false. Curiously enough Sir W. Coventry once said what was not true. It was put into his mouth by the Duke of Buckingham, to whom Sir William sent a challenge by Harry Savile. In consequence, the latter was imprisoned in the "gate-house," whereas, if any wrong had been done, he, as a gentleman by birth, should have been sent to the Tower. There was a great stir about the matter. To this young man, grown older, and in a more responsible position than that of Groom of the Bedchamber to the Duke of York, Sidney wrote letters, expressly stating that he tells nothing but the truth, which give a vivid picture of English politics from 1679 to 1680. All authorities agree that they are remarkably truthful, and Mr. Hallam, who refers to them, might have found his words contradicted by their contents.

The letters begin in April, 1679 ("Letters to Savile," p. 5. Works. Quarto. 1772) when Sidney was "not in Parliament, but very busy out of it," as Mr. Hallam says.

Sidney, as we have said, finding it was not good to stand aside, had given up his intention to live in retirement, and had endeavoured to enter Parliament as a Member for Guildford.

Of course he appeared as a member of the country party, who would support Essex and Halifax, and sympathise with Lord Russell. The Court took much interest in the election of this Parliament, and the Duke of York came specially from Windsor to support the candidature of Dalmahoy, who had married that Duchess of Hamilton, whose husband had been killed at Worcester, fighting for the Prince. Dalmahoy was a thorough courtier, and Sidney was very much the contrary.

His candidature had a remarkable supporter. William Penn, the famous Quaker, was a great admirer of Sidney's. He was born in 1644, and (in 1670, on the death of his father, Sir William Penn, the admiral, to whom he was at length reconciled, after a quarrel on account of his religious opinions) had inherited a comfortable income, and was now living at Wonninghurst in Sussex. He had increased his intimacy with Sidney in some business affairs connected with his Chancery suit, and the two men seemed to have been mutually attracted to each other. Naturally, Penn, in his position was willing to enlist so powerful an ally for his cause of "universal toleration of faith and worship." Both men could approve of the saying of Stephen of Poland, which Penn liked to quote: "I am king of men, not of consciences; of bodies, not of souls." Sidney, on the other

hand, was much interested in Penn's new colony of Pennsylvania, and the deep culture and straightforward singleness of purpose in the younger man, as yet unspoilt by Court-life, must have greatly pleased him.

The election was most unfair. Penn worked hard and obtained several votes for Sidney; but the Recorder of Guildford tried to excite the people against the Quaker, called him a Jesuit (which could scarcely have pleased the party he served), and tendered an oath to him illegally, finally turning him out of court. Penn, who had just published "England's Great Interest in the Choice of a New Parliament," was doubly aggrieved; and when, as was to be expected, Algernon Sidney was not returned, he wrote an indignant letter. It matters comparatively little, that Algernon Sidney had as good a case against the Guildford authorities as ever man had.

Most flagrantly, influence was brought to bear upon the Mayor and Corporation, soldiers were "made free" of the town three weeks before, the freedom of the town was refused to the candidate, even the day of the election was suddenly anticipated to take him by surprise, and the votes of persons who had received charity were admitted, while there was a great show of hands for Sidney after all. "To me," says Penn, "it looks not a fair and clear election." Penn is most anxious that a petition should be presented, and will use all his personal influence to get it attended to. But the few words of appreciative sympathy must have seemed almost strange to Sidney, and are of value as a fair testimony to the confidence with which he inspired

his friends. "I hope the disappointment so strange . . . does not move thee; thou (as thy friends) had a conscientious regard to England, and to be put aside by such base ways, is really a suffering for righteousness; thou hast embarked thyself with them that seek and love and choose the best things; and number is not weight with thee."

So Sidney was not in Parliament in 1679. From that period to 1682 we have his letters to Savile. We have most carefully collated them with the best authorities, and altered some of Hollis's dates, and the result has been that, with all due deference to Mr. Hallam's judgment in every other matter, in this we respectfully, but flatly, contradict his assertions. We find in these letters a most just and impartial estimate of current events, often indeed couched in the ironical language of bitter earnestness, as in the letter of February $\frac{19}{17}$ (misdated by Hollis 1678–9, but which belongs to) 1680. We find no partiality for France, no visionary enthusiasm, but often condemnation of those he was attached to by party ties, so far as he was of a party, wide-mindedness in all respects save one, and strong common-sense. He refers to the agreement between himself and Savile "to set down nothing but truth," and relying on the safety of the Embassy letters, as on his friend's honour, he freely expresses his ideas. His return for Savile's services, whom he speaks of gratefully, is to let him know constantly the exact state of affairs in England; false news would be worse than useless. Letters written for a friend to depend upon, in matters which may concern

his personal safety, certainly his career, are likely to form truthful historical materials. We may freely believe that the "Savile letters" are Sidney's views, as spoken from the Palace of Truth—reserve there might be, but never an attempt to mislead. If Sidney's ordinary "word was truth," statements made for the sake of gratitude, on the honour of a friend and a gentleman, are certain to be correct, so far as Sidney's knowledge went. We trace in them the beginning of Sir William Temple's scheme, the new Council of State, which should be composed of men whose average income should be £10,000 a-year. Three men connected with Sidney were to the front—Sunderland, recalled from France to be Secretary of State, Halifax, and Essex—till the quarrel in the party on the Exclusion Bill drove them from power in 1680.

At the time the new Parliament and new Ministry of 1679 began their work, the great excitement of the nation was on the subject of the Popish Plot.

> Succeeding times shall equal folly call,
> Believing nothing or believing all,

are the almost hackneyed but most expressive lines which sum up the whole matter.

We cannot blame the nation for its wild excitement. There was ample ground for disbelieving every one in any way connected with the Government; the only mistake was that perhaps the most infamous obtained the greatest credit.

The impeachment of Danby occupies the greater

part of the first of Sidney's letters. That minister, who saw that even Shaftesbury's contemptuous neutrality could not save him from the anger of the Commons with his service to Charles, in the interval between the Parliaments tried fruitlessly to make friends with the mammon of unrighteousness.

On April 17, 1678, Sidney says: "You will have heard from all hands what temper the House of Commons appears to be of, and that the Earl of Danby hath accomplished his promise of bringing it into an entire subjection to the King's will, as well as the other two points of paying His Majesty's debts, increasing his treasure, and rendering him considerable among his neighbouring princes: which are verified in leaving twenty-two shillings and tenpence in the Exchequer, two and forty thousand pounds of passive debts, and the revenue anticipated for almost a year and a half; and the account his lordship was pleased to give in his speech to the Peers of the esteem the King of France had for his person and government."

This, for the benefit of Mr. Hallam's readers, we venture to label "ironical," but we think few will mistake the drift of the passage, with a remembrance of the scenes in the session of 1678 in their minds, —when Montague showed up the letter of Danby, postscripted by Charles, to an indignant House, and to (what was the most extraordinary thing, if any one had been cool enough to think of it) an astonished Shaftesbury.

"Some," continues Sidney, "think he had behaved himself so well as to deserve no punishment, Shaftes-

bury, Essex, and Halifax differing something in opinion from them." We do not propose to follow the stages of the Earl of Danby's impeachment. It belongs to general history. Sidney's comments on the parliamentary proceedings showed that he was what we venture to think the only true cynic—a disappointed man of great abilities, who, after passing through the dark valley of despondency, and being brought face to face with the realities of man's nature, takes refuge in humour. He sees things so seriously that unless he looked on their amusing side his sensitive, highly-strung nature could not bear the pain; and, as unconsciousness may mercifully supervene on physical agony, so the power of consoling himself by "conceits" is given to him who has borne his lot bravely.

The letters of Sidney in this later period of his life, as we might expect from his character, reveal a most unprejudiced method of looking on men and parties. He, of course, supports Halifax and Essex, and approves of Russell; but he touches each event in the ironical manner which seems to have puzzled those who ought to have known better. It is well known that a man should rarely laugh at his own sarcasm, but "written letters pass not always as words do; they remain upon record, are still under the examination of the eye, and tortured, they are sometimes to confess that of which they were never guilty." If the dry words and the grave look deceive many, who know not whether to take a speech for jest or earnest, how much more may a writing be misinterpreted? It is only on that hypothesis

that we are at all able to explain how from "the letters to Savile materials should have been drawn for supposing that Algernon Sidney was bent on uniting his party to France, or on producing a republic in England." These two points deserve a separate chapter. We may, however, note that Sidney did believe most strongly in a "Popish plot," as many men did, who gave as little credit to the infamous witnesses brought to prove lies. The nation seems to have believed the particulars, but intelligent men were of opinion that behind these improbable tales was concealed a real plan of more powerful enemies. Hence the agitation for the Exclusion Bill.

CHAPTER VIII.

ACCUSATIONS. 1678—1681. ÆTAT. 56—59.

> Faithful found
> Among the faithful, faithful only he;
> Among innumerable false, unmoved,
> Unshaken, unseduced, unterrified,
> His loyalty be kept, his love, his zeal:
> Nor number, nor example with him wrought
> To swerve from truth, or change his constant mind,
> Though single.
>
> *Milton.*

THIS chapter will contain subjects of which the most careful and impartial handling is necessary, since circumstantial evidence is most deceptive. Prejudice has raised such clouds of dust on either side that it is very difficult to see any landmarks by which we may find our way over what is, sometimes an unbeaten track, sometimes one in which there are so many misleading paths that the right one is most difficult to discern. Algernon Sidney's figure is dimly seen throughout this time. "Knowledge is power;" he was well acquainted with nearly all the leading men at the Hague, he was a man of undoubted truth and honour, and of unflinching spirit; his abilities, learning, and penetration, his wide reading

and long travels, all fitted him to be the centre of his party. It was not because of his prejudices, but because of his impartiality, that Sidney became so "busy out of Parliament." "We live in a time," he said, "that no man by what is passed can well judge what is to be expected for the future." His utter calmness deceived even his own contemporaries. To them it was a matter of life or death, they thought, to settle who should be king. Sidney laughed at this. "It did not matter to him whether James of York or James of Monmouth" should succeed Charles. They—not understanding, as we can now, that the first requirement of the people was to limit the powers of the Crown, so that, politically, no personal vices or virtues should make much difference to the Constitution—thought he wanted a republic. So he might do, in theory; but he saw that it was impracticable. It is very much, however, as he says in his "Discourses": "The law of a free monarchy is nothing to us, for that monarchy is not free which is regulated by a law not to be broken without the guilt of perjury," as is the case with that of England; "He who thinks the crown not worth accepting on these conditions may refuse it." Our last chapter will contain many instances of the utter misrepresentation of his political views. We are not wiser than those who read them at first, or pretended to do so, but we are impartial, and "all can raise the flower now, for all have got the seed." Sidney described a state of things which did not exist; his hearers reasoned from false premises, assuming that he must be speaking of what they could see, and that only.

We have round us what he required, and glory in our "crowned Republic." When we look at his writings for ourselves, and do not accept the second-hand views which have become fixed in history, very naturally, seeing that no one has contradicted them—we know what Sidney means since we have attained to his level. Of one misrepresentation we shall speak hereafter. Of the other, it is sufficient to say that Sidney's name is coupled with Russell's, not because they both died unjustly for the same cause, but because Sidney found in the moderate, high-principled Russell one who could best carry out his ideas of practical politics.

It is on this ground that we can defend his so-called connection with France. With Lord Russell, in this respect, he stands or falls, and the grounds on which Lord John Russell justified the English leaders for listening to French proposals in 1678–9 are as applicable to Sidney as to Russell. It was through him, as an "idle man" (*i.e.*, as usual, an indefatigable student), and as known to both parties, that negotiations seem to have been chiefly carried on.

Charles had by this time lost the confidence of Louis, to whom he was no longer very necessary. But at the same time Louis needed England's neutrality. If the Country Party did not wish to grant supplies to the King, and required a fresh Parliament to be summoned, they, failing their endeavours to have an "honest war with France," might be induced to withdraw their pressure on Charles. Louis therefore endeavoured to touch the Country Party on two points—to aid them to

obtain their wish for a new Parliament, and to give them the assurance that he had no wish to help Charles to be an absolute monarch over his people. England was safe, if she would not interfere with his plans, now that Louis had seen that Charles was not sincere in his conversion. D'Avaux in the meantime tried to play on Algernon Sidney in another fashion, exciting his prejudices against the Prince of Orange, who, as the supplanter of De Witt, represented in this way the loss of a Republican State. His brother, Henry Sidney, on the other hand, intrigued with the Prince. And here Algernon Sidney may have made a mistake, which appears more unnatural to us than to the men of his own age. But, in fact, the more we examine this period, the more complex the threads seem to become. The sum of the matter was that Louis succeeded in his attempt to convince the English opposition that his interest and theirs—very far from identical—were travelling on the same road. In such cases it is not easy to shake off a fellow-traveller without much incivility. As Lord John Russell shows, the fact that, for English interests, Englishmen condescended to be associated with their enemy's policy, meant that "the question was not whether to admit foreign interference, but whether to direct foreign interference already admitted to a good object." "The dangerous schemes of the Court were defeated, or at least retarded, it is true, by the conduct of the opposition, but that conduct was the result of their old suspicions and the advice of Sidney."

Lord Russell stands out clearly from any charge of

sacrificing the liberties of his country to France. "The concert was a concert only in name." The Country Party no more wished to play the game of Louis than he to play theirs. It became a question of Greek against Greek. But other means which Louis adopted to demonstrate that he wished to secure the English opposition as his friends have cast a deep stain on all who can be shown to have anything to do with them, the report of which has even touched the fair fame of Sidney.

Money was to be freely employed to gain partisans for Louis, "by means of William Russell and other discontented people." Now, by the statements of Ruvigny, Lord Russell is absolutely cleared; but we certainly trust more to surrounding circumstances and to his character than to that of his wife's cousin's word, except that Ruvigny was honourable also. In every way, however, Lord Russell's name remains spotless.

Did Algernon Sidney take money from Barillon? If so, for what purpose? Direct proof in either case is impossible. One ground may be laid aside. Hallam points to the fact that Sidney was a poor man, while others have said that his station placed him above caring for such a paltry sum. The former is the more correct view, as we know who have traced his struggles; the inference does not follow.

Barillon, who praises Sidney for his principles, and says he has been of much use to him, declares that he gave five hundred guineas on two separate occasions to Sidney; the name occurs in his accounts, and it is an

undeniable fact that Sidney made use of information obtained from Barillon to lay before Halifax, to help him in his attack on Danby. On the other hand is Sidney's life and character, as opposed to Barillon's.

The latter—coarse in mind as in person, with airs of self-sufficiency, described by Mme. de Sévigné and by Sidney himself in terms which are more graphic than pleasing—was just the man to have no scruples about defrauding others (he was known to grow mysteriously rich), and through his conceit to fall an easy victim to those who played upon his ignorance. "You know," says Sidney, "M. de Barillon governs us—if he be not mistaken."

We have simply stated the fact, and leave it to be denied or affirmed, whether Sidney received the money Barillon said he gave to him. It is a question which no one can settle as an absolute certainty. Moral doubt we have none. The one thing we have against it is the indirect evidence which is contained in Horace Walpole's dictum. "One can scold other people again, or smile and jog one's foot and affect not to mind it, but those airs won't do with ourselves; one always comes by the worst in a dispute with one's own conviction." As Sidney always was of the same opinion when he had once adopted it—to a fault—it is scarcely likely that Barillon would have had power to make him believe that bribery was not as detestable for himself as he thought it for other people. We must give his own words on this subject: "He could not be bribed by gold who did not think it necessary . . . but . . .

servile natures . . . have no other care than to get money for their supply by begging, stealing, bribing, and other infamous practices. . . . And it may be observed that a noble person now living among us, who is a great enemy to bribery, was turned out from a considerable office as a scandal to the Court; for, said the principal minister, he will make no profit of his place, and shame them who do." This is part of a long and scathing condemnation of corruption.

It would be too easy to prove the corruption of public men in England at that period—it was long before the contagious disease was stamped out—and quite as easy to show how utterly Sidney despised such means of winning men.

Lord John Russell, after doubting that the sum was paid, thinks that, "no one of common sense can believe that he took the money for himself. His character is one of heroic pride and generosity."

The sum was too small for public purposes, and even as a mark of esteem, "such as Louis did confer upon neutral men," it is extremely improbable that Sidney would be less particular than Hollis, who declined, under the circumstances, to accept "even a snuffbox from France."

So much it has been necessary to say.

Other accusations brought against him by the Court were much more likely to have been true, and yet in many ways they were not.

"When a favourable decree, obtained in Chancery, gave me hopes of being freed from such vexatious

business, I resumed my former design of returning into France, and, to that end, bought a small parcel of ground in a friend's name, with an intention of going immediately into it. This proceeded from the uneasiness of my life, when I found not only the real discontents, that grew to be too common, were ascribed unto me, but sham plots fastened upon me, so as I could never think my life a day in safety."

The truth is, live as quietly as Sidney might, his character forced those of his party to appeal to him and those of the Court to dread him.

His attitude was incomprehensible. "We have every day alarms from the French fleet, and I find nobody but the Lord Sunderland and myself who believe not one word of it." A man who is known to disbelieve what every one else thinks seriously of, however good his reasons for incredulity may be, is usually thought to assume superiority aggressively, or to have an interest in denying the truth.

Then, again, we know Sidney was a great and earnest talker.

Those who watched this scene in the Park must have wondered at and gossiped over it. It is in April, 1679.

"All foreign affairs are at a stand, only Van Beunighen* takes great pains to make people believe the King of France intends to add England unto his other

* The Dutch Ambassador, who, when at the Hague, had shocked the French Ambassador by replying to some glorification of Louis : "I do not consider what your king may wish to do, but what he can do."

conquests, and disabuse such as were so foolish as to believe there was anything of truth in the reports of those that had spoken of the Popish plot; and, finding me infected with the same opinion with some of my friends, he was pleased to spend two hours the other day in the Park to convince me of my error, in which he did succeed, as well as he used to do in his great designs."

Sidney arguing vigorously with Van Beuning, or Beunighen, for two hours in the Park, in the open sight of the King and courtiers, perhaps, might give rise to suspicions, which in this case, at least, were based only on circumstantial evidence.

He really must have annoyed friends and foes alike, —this man whom it was intensely difficult to prove in the wrong; who now at most would have pleaded "stand out of my sunshine," to any one who offered him a favour; and whom it was impossible to get approval from, unless he thought it was really deserved on wide grounds. He still led "the student's life" for a great part of his time. That must have seemed a pretence in those days in a truly ardent politician, who had wished for nothing better than to serve his country by being a servant of the State. He wanted a free State. This was incomprehensible to those who really were not fit for the liberty he would have given. He was an "Atheist" or a "Freethinker," said others, with whom bigotry and religious ardour were convertible terms. He was liberal, wide-minded, and tolerant, and ready to do personal services for any one in need without hope of a return. "Things wind about so, the more straightforward you are the more you are

puzzled;" and in days of intrigue, by being an exception to the almost universal rule, the more also you puzzle.

He spent a great deal of his time in writing and in study, reviewing his old work, and apparently preparing, for eventual publication, his famous (Posthumous) MSS. He took much interest in the drift of the struggle and in the conversation of those who really were in the thick of it; but ordinary news "came very little into the cell that covered" his "too honoured existence."

Three acts of friendship of various degrees of importance occurred about 1680. The first is told somewhat comically. "Sir," he protests, being a man who much loved horses, "I desire you to tell M. de Ruvygny the younger, that upon his recommendation I did address the Duc de Gramont's esquire to the places where all the best horses in England are to be had, but he has rid four hundred miles and he is returned without liking any. (To say the truth he is such a proud ass that he neither knows what is good, nor will believe anybody else.) I had directed him to see two, that are said to be as fine young horses of five years old as any are in England, which never having been trained, were fat, and as he said, *trop relevés*. Near Lincoln he saw two of the Lord Castletown's, which had the same faults. At the Lord Burlington's in Yorkshire he saw one that is thought to be worth as much as any one in England:" he did not like that or any others. "Upon all which," says Sidney quietly, "I have no more to say to M. Ruvygny than that he should find a way to revive Bucephalus, or send a man that hath more wit than this to take such

as the world affords." So ended one attempt at serving a friend.

The consequences of the next were much more serious, though undertaken, as usual, with the kindness of the man who has been occasionally mentioned as having cherished a viper in his bosom. The parable held good in this case.

Lord Howard of Escrick was a plausible man who pretended to great ideas, and descended to practices which would disgrace a thief, according to the popular idea. He had no more sense of honour in any transaction of his life with man or woman than the lowest criminal. Charles himself, to whom he was introduced, apparently for very curious purposes (seeing that his sponsor, so to speak, received £250 for providing the King with Lord Howard), afterwards declared, in so many words, that whatever the opposition were doing, no one would be such a fool as to trust Howard. But of a clever hypocrite, perhaps another of his own kind is the only real judge. A greater contrast to Algernon Sidney it would be impossible to imagine, and how he was deceived by this impostor we cannot tell, nor could imagine, were it not that such things happen. No doubt Sidney supposed that Howard, as one of the same class as himself by birth and of the same "unfashionable" principles by choice, never would trouble himself to assume a virtue when he had it not. Persecution purifies a party, might make a good copy-book saying; for no one unites himself to a lost cause except as a zealot, or—as a spy.

Such was Lord Howard of Escrick—a pretended zealot, a real spy.

The dramatic retribution of our faults of character is often strikingly appropriate. In the story of ingratitude, which was an underplot to the great tragedy, we see how Sidney's two failings "which leaned to virtue's side" had their Nemesis. He was too generous. He was as obstinate in taking his own way as he was tolerant for others. Against the dictates of prudence he helped Lord Howard. He visited him in the Tower, he lent him money, with no hope of its being returned. Burnet disliked Sidney, who, we have no doubt, repaid that divine's intrusion with many a quiet but cutting piece of sarcasm, when they met at Lord Russell's.

Something tells its own tale, when the pragmatical prelate remarks that Sidney had a "particular way of insinuating himself into people that would hearken to his notions, and not contradict him. He tried me, but I was not so submissive a hearer; so he lived afterwards at a great distance!" There are many bits of historical byplay we should like to have witnessed; and to any one with a sense of the ludicrous who had really been there, the account of the quarrel would probably be one degree less humorous than the encounter. Sidney was usually grave, earnest, and courteous. Yet he no doubt got the better of Burnet, who could forgive a man for much (for he was a good-tempered and kind-hearted busybody, to whom we are grateful for graphic information), but not for being his superior in logic and in intellect. Sidney "tried him!" Probably

he tried Sidney; for that Sidney would have moved a step out of his way to make Burnet's acquaintance we cannot believe.

This is, however, Burnet's account of the friendship of Sidney with Howard: "He (Sidney) had a great kindness for Lord Howard, as was formerly told; for that lord hated both the King and Monarchy as much as he himself did." In other words, Howard took Sidney in, and, unfortunately, Algernon let his infatuation go too far. "He prevailed on Lord Essex to take Lord Howard into their secrets; though Lord Essex had expressed such an ill opinion of him a little before to me as to say he wondered how any man could trust himself alone with him. Lord Russell, although he was his cousin-german, had the same ill opinion of him. Yet Sidney overcame both their aversions." This latter is perfectly true. Never was infatuation more complete or more fatal.*

It may be said that if we insist on the innocency of the Country Party (which we do not), no spy could do them harm. Now Howard was not only a spy, but a perjurer. His intimacy with their conversation and characters was cultivated as Iachimo took note of the room in which Imogen slept. But the great crime of the better men in

* The power thus placed in the hands of a man like Howard is soon seen, if we remember what a connection it thus opened up to him. Lord Essex had married Sidney's aunt; Sunderland, Sidney's nephew, was the brother-in-law of Halifax and Savile; Lady Russell, the daughter of Lord Southampton and the niece of Rouvigné the elder; Shaftesbury married the niece of Lord Southampton.

the Country Party was that they were planning means to break the power of the Crown. To do this is treasonable until it is finished—reasonable when it is. Every thought of the Country Party was opposed to that of the Court. In days of danger, when the leaders on both sides knew that the City was mutinous and the nation discontented, Scotland sullen, and Ireland rather more mismanaged than usual, it was no light matter to have ordinary conversation reported. English gentlemen are not used to have spies among them. And so Howard not only robbed Sidney, who helped him as he lay imprisoned and impoverished, but prevailed upon him to make his friends receive him, and then betrayed them. If we are making our villains too black, it will not be complained of as untrue to nature by those who know the times of which we are speaking.

We now turn to the third act of friendship performed by Sidney—the aid he gave to William Penn in drawing up the constitution for his colony. The rough draft had already been framed before Sidney returned home. In this the two men agreed that "our civil union is our civil safety." The Constitution of Pennsylvania consisted of twenty-four Articles; the fundamental one being on the securing of liberty of conscience; the others relating to the freedom of the subject, method of popular representation, justice for all, and punishment of wrong, so as to secure reparation to the community, with a door of escape for the offender. "As," says Penn, "my understanding and inclination have ever been directed to observe and reprove mischief in government, so it is

now put into my power to settle one. . . . I leave myself and successors no power of doing mischief, that the will of one man may not hinder the good of a whole country."

This might seem innocent to us. It was not thought so in those days. It seemed to be a disloyal insinuation. Nevertheless Sidney and Penn had many consultations over their Constitution, which, doubtless, both of them enjoyed drawing up. "These philosophers" had in their new State a "white canvas," and there was no standing army to undo their plans after they had finished making them.

The question of the power of the sword was again becoming one which troubled England. Neither party would allow the other to have control of the army. In one of the first letters to Savile, Sidney observes, the next point likely to be pursued is to prosecute last week's vote (March, 1679), that "all the forces now in England, except the trained bands, are kept up contrary to law."

"The King certainly inclines not to be so stiff, as formerly, in only exalting those that exalt prerogative; but the Earl of Essex, and some others that are coming into play thereupon, cannot avoid being suspected of having intentions different from what they have hitherto professed."

In a few days he writes again, saying to Savile: "You are so much aforehand in obliging me when I most wanted a friend, that I cannot hope in a long time to pay my debt, though I were in a place that gave me

more advantages than any I can ever reasonably expect; but you may ever be sure of all that is within my reach."

We purpose very briefly to touch upon that which came within his reach, only giving in full anything which helps to make his character and conduct more clear.* We do not enlarge upon his account of Danby's surrender, or of the Council being appointed. After that "the King went to the House of Lords, and sent for the House of Commons, to whom he did impart all that had passed; and all that I have yet spoken with seem much pleased, though it might have been wished that some of those that are chosen had been left out. A friend of yours and mine" (Halifax) "is, as far as I understand, the author of all this" (the original idea came from Temple), "and if he and two more" (Essex and Sunderland) "can well agree among themselves, I believe they will have the management of almost all businesses, and may bring much good to themselves and the nation." Others, however, tell us that the King hated Halifax, and that Shaftesbury, whom Sidney would have preferred to be excluded, was made President of the Council, on the principle that he would do least harm to the Crown when holding office under it.

The next letter is on April 28, 1679. It speaks of the five "Popish lords" waiting trial in the Tower, and then gives a clear account of the issues involved in Danby's claim to be set free, having been pardoned by the King. The question was the important one, whether

* For other facts we refer to the letters. Those who have them will perhaps be glad to have them re-dated, where necessary.

the King's pardon can overrule an impeachment by the Commons on a public account. Sidney points out the affirmative may be carried in the Lords, but the Commons would object, and the nation would follow them in being refractory, so that "all business would be thereby obstructed ; by which means the King, upon the personal account of the Earl of Danby, would lose the advantage of all that hath been done of late to please the nation ; which I leave to your judgment, that know the Court better than I do."

Some judges were put out. The House of Lords and the House of Commons were busy with bills about Popery, wishing to relieve Protestant Nonconformists, but not knowing how to do it. Shaftesbury and Halifax, not often found agreeing, "are eminent in pleading for indulgence to tender-conscienced Protestants, and severity against Papists." The lesson of toleration was not learnt. But we must remember that we had a King on the throne who wished to be a Romanist, that he might rule absolutely, and the probable successor was one who wished to rule absolutely that he might make his kingdom Romanist from high motives. The want of toleration for Papists was even then a mistake, but a mistake which showed that there were recognitions of the cause of liberty.

The Commons were decidedly arrogant, as the list of their demand shows, and Lord Russell, though a Privy Councillor, was appointed to carry an important hostile message to the Lords. They tried to regulate religion, the army and navy, and the country, and summoned

Lord Danby to their bar. It was this spirit which Charles had to meet, and did meet, and, for the time, did break. Other matters were of course spoken of, and there are many allusions in Sidney's letters which would deserve a word of notice, did we not wish to keep to our rule, of mentioning, chiefly, what affected him.

The letter of May $\frac{5}{15}$, 1679, is an important one for our case. "Though the last week was spent rather in wrangling than the despatch of any business of importance, I continue to give you an account of what I hear, because these irregular motions are often the forerunners of great matters. . . . Perhaps others have not been so free in telling you the effect of it as I shall be."

The King and Court think the Parliament might be content to limit the power of any Papist successors. Parliament, in its angry temper, thinks this is "a little gilding to cover a poisonous pill." "These put them upon various counsels: some would impeach him" (the Duke of York) "upon what is discovered of his share in the plot" (a very risky matter); "others incline more to bring in an Act to exclude him from the succession of the Crown, as being a Papist, and thereby a friend to, and dependent upon, a foreign Power. Some of those that are of this mind look" who is fittest to succeed if this be so, and they are "for the most part divided between the Prince of Orange and the Duke of Monmouth. 'The first hath plainly the most plausible title, by his mother and wife; but, besides the opinion of the influence it is believed the Duke of York would have over him, it is feared that the Commonwealth Party in Holland would

be so frighted with that as to cast itself absolutely into the hands of the King of France, who might thereby have a fair occasion of ruining both England and Holland.'"*

"I need not tell you the reasons against Monmouth," Sidney says, very significantly; "but the strongest I hear alleged for him are, that whosoever is opposed to York will have a good party, and all Scotland, which is every day like to be in arms, doth certainly favour him, and may probably be of as much importance in the troubles that are now likely to fall upon us as they were in the beginning of the last.

"Others are only upon negatives.

* This opinion, professedly given as a quotation by Sidney, may be compared with Barillon's report of what Sidney said, that Sidney was suspected of being gained over by Sunderland; that, however, to Barillon he appeared always to have the same sentiments, that he was the greatest friend of those opposed to the Courts, that Barillon having given him what his master permitted, Sidney was partly gained over, and with "quelque gratification nouvelle" it would be easy to gain him over entirely. However, he is very favourably disposed to what Louis would wish, and would not wish that England and the States General should make a league. D'Avaux also says that Sidney told him, or he told Sidney, that the Prince of Orange, as the opponent of liberty in Holland, would be the opponent of liberty in England. Barillon, a year later, confirms this view, but he rather spoils his story by observing that even the safety of the Catholic religion might be secured in England, if nobody was afraid of the King changing the Government. "M. de Sidney est un de ceux qui me parlent le plus fortement et le plus ouvertement sur cette matière."[1] I doubt whether even Sidney was in favour of universal toleration then.

[1] "Mr. Sidney is one of those who speak to me most strongly and openly upon this matter."

"But when I have said what I can upon this business I must confess I do not know three men of a mind, and that a spirit of giddiness reigns among us, far beyond any I have ever observed in my life."

Therefore Sidney was opposed to William of Orange because he was Prince of Orange, and to Monmouth because he was—himself. The story of Sidney's acquaintanceship with Monmouth is curious. Lord Howard told Sidney Monmouth wished to dine with him, and Monmouth that Sidney did not wish to be thought to run after Monmouth, as Burnet observes; though Sidney tells the story himself, saying Howard cozened them both. Howard said some regard was to be had to Sidney's "age and temper." In neither respect was Sidney likely to be pleased with Monmouth; he would see at once that he was a character with whom he could have nothing in common. He "spoke slightingly" of him, and he only saw him three times, he says. "Monmouth would never have been a constitutional King," says one writer; "he would have been the tool of a party." But he had not strength enough to be a sharp tool. He would have broken in the hands of any party which tried to do good work with him. Absalom was a better similitude for Monmouth than David for Charles. It is curious how Dryden, as a friend of the Court, wrote and published more damaging libels than Sidney was even suspected of; not indeed altogether with safety, for he was waylaid and beaten, it is said, soon after the publication of a book which he did not write, while he escaped free after the publication of his "Medal," and in the

state of the nation, we see no reason to disbelieve the story.

Far from Sidney being visionary, in reading other authors of the age, he seems to be one of the very few who kept their heads at all cool, or had any power of looking at things dispassionately. "Wit and fool," says Dryden, "are consequent of Whig and Tory, and every man is an ass or a knave to the contrary side." Sidney, however, to some degree attained "the calm indifference of the wise," and met with the reward of the wise in a time of folly.

He went on tracing the stages of Danby's impeachment with great acuteness—for it is not always easy to judge well of constitutional questions at a time when they are being discussed with practical illustrations—and he notes the passing of the Habeas Corpus Act (in May, 1679), the progress of the "Popish plot" conspirators, and the Scotch troubles, with Archbishop Sharp's murder. "I can only make the unpleasant revelations of such disorders here as in my opinion threaten us with the greatest mischiefs that can befall a nation." Shaftesbury took up the cause of the Duke of Monmouth; the Exclusion Bill was pressed forward by men of all parties, though none supported Shaftesbury; the City, in which Howard was busy, got up a petition which was supposed to be signed by 100,000 men; Essex was opposed to the Exclusion Bill, as setting aside James and his children; but Sidney has been out all day in the east wind and dust, and is "almost asleep," so he does not write much.

His next letter tells of the surprise with which, the

day after he had written, people had learnt that the King came suddenly down and dissolved the Parliament. Shaftesbury said he would have the heads of those who advised the King to this step. These were, Temple, the real author, with Halifax and Essex, the supposed originators of this scheme.

"All men's wits have been screwed ever since that day (May 27) to find out the consequences. Everybody hath his conjectures, and the most ignorant showed themselves the most bold in asserting their opinions. Many find that the King would not have done it if he had not resolved to send for the Duke, keep up the army, desire assistances from abroad, sell Jersey and Tangiers to the French (for which Mr. Savile is to make the bargain!), set the Earl of Danby at liberty, and with the help of the Papists and bishops set up for himself."

The "visionary" Sidney goes on to observe in his dry way: "But instead of this we see little reason to believe the Duke will think himself well here. The army is in part disbanded, and had been entirely before this day, if it had pleased Colonel Birch. The place from which the foreign assistances should come is not known; Mr. Savile is not thought very good at such treaties. The Earl of Danby is like to lie where he is, and the utmost help His Majesty can, for aught I hear, expect until the Parliament do meet, is by Fox, Kent, and Duncomb's credit, which will perhaps be found not to be very steady foundation."

Speaking of the discontent caused by the disregard of the Church and the sudden prorogation of Parliament:

"This fills men with many ill-humours, the Parliament men go down discontented, and are like by their report to add unto the discontents of the countries which are already very great; and the fear from the Papists at home and their friends abroad being added thereto, they begin to look more than formerly unto the means of preserving themselves."

So did the King. But all his efforts to secure votes made some think "that a King is ever a loser when he enters into a faction and bandies against his subjects. . . . I do not find the new Privy Counsellors well at ease, and am not free from fear that whilst they endeavour to keep fair with both parties they may give distaste unto both."

Harry Sidney, Algernon's brother, with whom he did not agree, was to go into Holland. The King sent him, but Sunderland, behind the King's back, entrusted him with messages to Fagel the pensionary and to the Prince of Orange; while Harry was playing a game of his own, and his brother, as D'Avaux says, was vexed with him.

"Some silly people," goes on Sidney, speaking of diplomatic changes, "gave as silly a hope, that the peace would break and the league be renewed against the French. . . . However, I see no inclination in discreet men here to desire such a discomposure of things abroad, as should engage us to take any part in them until our affairs at home are better settled than they are yet like to be."

In this sentence, surely, lie Sidney's views on foreign

politics. He wished for no war with France, because England had enough to do at home. "Some that know matters better than I do must tell whether we shall have the same Parliament at the end of the prorogation, or a new one, or none at all. I think this, or another, will be found necessary; and if this be dissolved another will be chosen of less inclination to favour the Court."

This latter prophecy was fulfilled in 1680. Meanwhile Ireland was in great disorder and Scotland in open rebellion. Shaftesbury was dismissed, and Sidney only saw him once or twice that year, and never again. Russell supported his views to a certain extent, but Temple, Halifax, and Essex looked to the Prince of Orange. Temple, disappointed with his schemes, retired into private life.

As for Sidney, his letters became full of Scotch business, which he confesses he does not in the least understand *au fond.* The rebellion was expected; Lauderdale was unpopular; and Monmouth was sent to put it down with as little force as it might be possible to use. The Papist trials were going on meanwhile. Monmouth's popularity was increased by his going into Scotland. Seeing this, Sidney speaks more favourably of him, though he is never very much pleased with the Protestant Duke.

The postscript to the letter is curious. Monmouth's attack on the conventicle men will startle people at present, "but that will not hold. The Scotch lords here have been so wise as to leave their countrymen to be cut to pieces, but, as some believe, not enough to keep

themselves so free from corresponding with them as not to leave that which, being well followed, may bring their heads to the block."

In July the same subject is continued, and the method of putting down a rebellion is discussed. "I know not how far this may concern some that are or lately have been here, but it is probable enough they may have the fortune that ordinarily accompanies them that pretend to be very subtile and keep well with both sides, ever do too much or too little; and that, whereas they might have prevented all tumults, if they had endeavoured it, by denying all manner of favour to the discontented people, or reformed the state of that kingdom, if they would have taken the conduct of them, and very well provided for their interest by either way, may have ruined the poor people by stirring them up and leaving them to themselves."

Certainly words like these do not read like those of the Sidney we have been taught to believe in, but much more as if they had been cut from a moderate newspaper of our own day. And here is a piece of good-natured raillery, which shows that his sense of humour had never deserted him.

"If I had a mind to play the politic, like a House of Commons' man newly preferred to be a privy counsellor, I should very gravely excuse myself for not writing to you by the last post, and lay the fault upon my want of leisure, putting as much weight on a lawsuit" (July, 1680) "as they do upon affairs of state; but, having *at their cost* learnt, that those who make such discourses cheat

none but themselves, I ingenuously confess I had nothing to say; and that now the parliament is prorogued and the Court at Windsor I hear little more than I shall do when I am dead. The truth is, some of our friends, being newly grown men of business, are so politic and secret, that a man who sees it shall hardly forbear laughing; but none is so ingenuous as to be content that men should do it except the Lord Halifax."

He then tells Savile what he heard from Holland, of the Prince of Orange trying to league himself with England and Spain, "which I believe will take effect if the French can be persuaded to sleep three months and take no notice of it," etc., etc.

But the same day that the letter was written, Parliament was again suddenly dissolved, the blame being cast upon Sunderland, Essex, and Halifax (then made an earl). The King was taken seriously ill in August, and, afraid of Shaftesbury, the Triumvirate summoned James of York from Brussels. "Men's minds were more disturbed than ever I remember them to have been, so that there is no extremity of disorder to be imagined which we might not probably have fallen into if the King had died."

Lauderdale was protected by the exercise of the King's prerogative. The change in opinion about Halifax and Essex was very great. Having spoken so much against the Papists, their sending for the Duke of York to prevent the popular "Protestant Duke" (as Monmouth was called) from succeeding, exposed them to charges of inconsistency, of which Shaftesbury, who

knew what the city wanted, was not slow to take advantage.

Sidney hated Shaftesbury, and was keen enough to see how little the Triumvirate was capable of leading the nation. We have not given his narrative of the Scotch campaigns, which show him to have been gradually led to take an interest in the career of Monmouth, as perhaps "the coming man." The letters are here, however, of distinct historical value. In the meantime Sidney, encouraged by William Penn's persuasions, was once more canvassing for a seat in Parliament. Penn, by sympathising with Sidney, was able to influence him. As Clarkson says on the former occasion, Penn "could not control his wish to do him service in a department where he believed his free spirit and noble talent would be attended with good to the country."

Sidney's opponent was his brother Harry—the friend of Sunderland and Temple—who was supported by his brother-in-law, Sir John Pelham. On Sidney's side are specially mentioned Sir John Temple, younger brother of Sir William, and Sir John Fagg, not undistinguished in the "Cavalier" Parliament. The borough was the small one of Bramber; and Sidney might easily have been returned had it not been for his own family. It was necessary to secure the safety of Henry Sidney, by giving him the privileges of a Member of Parliament. He was still in Holland; but the King had discovered something of his doings. This, as well as the fact that his family did not care for Sidney's "notions," may account doubly for the preference given to the younger

brother. It is rather absurd to suppose they were "afraid of the ardour of his temper," when he was by far the most respectable member of their family; and except Lord Leicester—whose early zeal for politics had cooled down into an embodiment of the popular idea of aristocratic apathy—the Court might think that others of the Sidneys and of their connections were a good deal more dangerous, if less able, than Algernon.

On the 28th October, 1679, Sidney writes to Savile that he has not written much, having no news. "I am not able to give so much as a guess whether the parliament will sit the 26th of January or not, and though I think myself in all respects well chosen, am uncertain whether I shall be of it or not, there being a double return; and nothing can be assured until the question thereupon be determined, unless it be that as I and my principles are out of fashion, my inclination going one way, my friendship and alliance with those that are likely to give occasion for the greatest contests drawing another, I shall be equally disliked and suspected by both parties, and thereby become the most inconsiderable member of the House."

But when the House did sit, Sidney was not chosen.

CHAPTER IX.

PLOTS AND COUNTERPLOTS. 1682—1683. ÆTAT. 60—61.

> And to the English court assemble now,
> From every region, apes of idleness ! . . .
> Have you a ruffian ? . . .
> Be happy, he will trouble you no more :
> England shall double gild his treble guilt,
> England shall give him office, honour, might.—*Shakespeare.*

OPPOSING his brother's schemes at the Hague, and noting the failure of D'Avaux' negotiations in a cautious way, for once, Sidney observed that "nothing is more to be feared in politics, than the success of unreasonable and ill-grounded counsels." Sidney thinks people are "bewitched," to believe Sir William Temple when he talked of the Prince of Orange being unopposed in Holland, but of one thing he is sure, "that parliament would not give a penny to another attempt at a war."

"You will certainly have heard of a precious plot, carried on by a man of four names, who had been almost as many times in the pillory for perjury and such other pieces of wit, whereby the Presbyterians should be brought under the suspicion of having one now on foot," Sidney writes to Savile in October.

In his "Apology" he says: "Not long after the discovery of the Popish plot, His Majesty was informed of a great plot of the non-conformists, and that I was at the head of it; and though, being admitted into His Majesty's presence, I did truly show unto him, that there neither was, nor could be anything of that nature as things then stood, because it would cast His Majesty into connection with the Papists, which they did most abhor,—the sham was continued, as appears by the meal-tub business. Though my name was not there found, I am well informed, that, if it had succeeded, I should have been involved in it."

Parliament met on the 21st of October, 1680, nearly a year having elapsed since the Bramber election. It had been repeatedly prorogued. The chief events of the year had been the formation of the Committee of Agitation; the consequent excited feeling throughout the country; the rise of "petitioners" and "abhorrers," who begged for a change in the succession or hated it; the open pretensions of Monmouth to the throne; his royal progress in August, while the Duke of York was presented to the Middlesex juries as a "Romish recusant," and Lady Portsmouth as a "national nuisance." She had influenced the King, while Sunderland looked after her and foreign affairs, Essex had been at the treasury, and Halifax had managed general State matters, so far as they allowed themselves to be managed. Howard, whom Sidney had begun to distrust, threw himself "into Shaftesbury's wildest schemes," that is, his most desperate, and therefore, under the circumstances

his most politic, game. The people made an idol of Monmouth. A few vices more or less were not considered much in those days, and we fear that more people read (Wilmot, Lord) Rochester's songs than the story of his death-bed repentance, however well told by Burnet the latter may be. The last noble victim of the Popish plot, Lord Stafford, still lingered in the Tower, and, we may say here, was tried and executed on December 29th, 1680.

There is, as we see by internal evidence, a year's interval between the letters dated October 29th and October 31st, which includes these and many other events. There were changes in the circle round Sidney. Moderate men had been disgusted with Charles. Russell and three others left the Council, as Halifax did for a time. Charles had again obtained support from Louis, who, in spite of his promises to the Opposition, had engaged Charles to carry out his wishes. He prorogued the House. Sidney's friendship was with his uncle Essex. Evelyn says, "As for my lord, he is a sober, wise, judicious, and pondering person, not illiterate beyond the rate of most noblemen in this age, very well versed in English historie and affairs, industrious, frugal, methodical, and every way accomplished. . . . He, being no great friend to the Duke, was now laid aside, his integrities and abilities being not so suitable in this conjuncture." At the same time he had not yet joined the Opposition. Sidney's influence, nevertheless, was beginning to tell upon him, besides, as every one was finding out by degrees, the minister of

King Charles *could* not be an honest man. All who worked under him had to part with their honesty or with their office.

What Sidney did between the two letters, October 29, 1679, and October 31, 1680, has nowhere been specially recorded; we have his name occasionally mentioned, and he speaks of his usual life as divided between study and entertaining friends, who came in and out of "his cell." He probably was not unhappy at this time, for he had ceased to desire power of the kind which he had not, and had attained the philosophy which often teaches a man that his disappointment is, as he says himself, "more for our advantage than what we sought."

Ashley Cooper and Algernon Sidney form a remarkably contrasted pair. Shaftesbury, turning with the tide; Sidney, who had always desired, but never sought or obtained, power: Shaftesbury, "unfixed in principles and place," at least, unprincipled even if we should allow that he worked for special ends; Sidney, who never was guilty of meanness in his life: Shaftesbury heading the crowd; Sidney, unpopular and unknown to those outside political and courtly circles: one representing the aggressive, but needful agitation which popularised an abstract cause, may be compared with the other who aimed at the steady education of a few to draw abstract truth from popular agitation. Both men were called patriots. Here the resemblance and the concert between them ended. Both men are of a type required for a country. The people hitherto have needed concrete objects, enthusiastically and violently pursued; whoso

deals with them must "strain a point to make it understood;" but, though it is a difficult matter to arouse their interest, it is just as necessary to find means of guiding it when aroused. Shaftesbury's agitation formed the motive power of the early stages of the Revolution; Sidney's talents were directed to the adoption of methods of steering. His ideas were the ballast of his party. "We are in a busy time," he writes, October 31, 1680, "and how empty soever any man's head hath formerly been, the variety of reports concerning things in agitation do so fill it, at least with an imagination of contributing something to other men's inventions, that they have little leisure to do anything else. This obligeth me to write in haste, and without any other consideration than of the agreement between you and me to set down nothing but truth."

These words refer to his writing, which probably occupied a good deal of his time. He had drafted, it is said, the Modest Vindication of the late Parliament, but as it was afterwards rewritten by others he did not consider it his own, and could therefore say at his trial that he had never published a sheet in his life. He, however, got out his "Discourses on Government," and began to revise them, in answer to the latest of Sir Robert Filmer's books, which had also the honour of being answered by Locke. This apparently occupied most of his spare time, and no author will believe that it did not take much of his interest.

The most troubled times produce most literature. If the spirit of the Elizabethan age expressed itself in

dramas, that of the late Stuart period overflowed in "exuberant verbosity" of pamphlets and prose writings of every kind, from those which Locke and Sidney were preparing to the most scurrilous broadside hawked about the city. The Government was in chaos. Where men used to take their swords they now used their pens, "heating their brains where they used to heat their tempers"—say rather, that they heated both.

On the 26th of October, 1680, Dangerfield was brought to the bar of the House on the Meal-tub Plot, and Francisco de Faria said that he had been suborned by the Portuguese Ambassador to cast hand-granades into Lord Shaftesbury's coach. Monmouth appeared, without the bar sinister being emblazoned on the Royal arms painted on his coach, at the Lord Mayor's feast, and the Duke of York was expected to return from Scotland. "The Lord Halifax brought in a bill for the speedy discovery and conviction of Papists, but so contrived that both parties are equally incensed against him for it. . . . I could have wished that, intending to oblige above a million of men that go under the name of Nonconformists, he had been pleased to consult with one of that number as to the ways of doing it," continues Sidney.

Lord Sunderland was now high in the King's favour. He won over the Duchess of Portsmouth to support the Exclusion Bill, which once more came on. The Country Party offered, through her, to allow the King to name his own successor, provided it was not the Duke of York. Sunderland supposed the King's affection for his brother

to be less, and the power of the Whigs, as they began to be called, more, than it was. On the Exclusion Bill, Essex, Shaftesbury, and Sunderland were with the minority for it in the Peers, and Halifax against it, with a majority of thirty. Here Halifax broke with his party altogether. Shaftesbury brought in a bill for the divorce of the King, as another possible means of settling the disputed question. Charles listened and laughed, but retained his Queen quietly. Jeffries, afterwards judge, was not "Parliament-proof," once observed that monarch; Charles was. We cannot help admiring his *insouciance* throughout his difficulties. His coolness was unique. Parliament became unbearably excited. It was horribly savage when Lord Stafford was found guilty, and even Russell lost his head, metaphorically, when the Exclusion Bill was thrown out by the Lords. The King dissolved Parliament at the end of 1680, and summoned a new one at Oxford, where it might be less conscious of the force it could wield when in sympathy with the City of London.

It seemed as if history were going to repeat itself. The trained bands of London had been on the winning side throughout the late wars; Parliament had been summoned to Oxford by the First Charles, when out of sympathy with popular rights and parliamentary liberties; those round the King were as doubtful as the moderate men had been round his father, at the time when Lord Leicester had waited for his commission to be ratified for Ireland; many good men had as before retired from the strife. But the war, inflamed by

religious zeal, as it might be, would not be entirely a religious war. Previously, we believe it would be correct to say, the civil war was a religious war, leavened with political strife; now it might be a political war arising out of religious discord. The nation had been educated to the secular side of Government by the immoral Court, as well as by our philosophical writers. Sidney's letter to Savile at this crisis, dated February $\frac{3}{13}$—and erroneously ascribed to 1678-79, why, I cannot see, as every allusion is most intelligible—is written very clearly, and with a good deal of his sarcastic temper.

There is one characteristic allusion in it which is explained by a passage in Evelyn's diary. On December 12th, 1680, Evelyn says: "I saw a meteor of an obscure bright colour, very much in shape like the blade of a sword, the rest of the sky very serene and clear. What this may portend God only knows; but such another phenomenon I remember to have seen in 1640, about the trial of the great Earl of Strafford, preceding our bloody rebellion. I pray God avert His judgments. We have of late had several comets, which though I believe appear from natural causes, and of themselves operate not, yet I cannot despise them."

If such were the thoughts of Evelyn, we can imagine how the uneducated, and usually unthinking, would regard the comet. It is typical of Sidney's position as a man before his time that in this he, as we shall see, took the view of it which they did not do, and probably was looked upon as most irreverent in consequence.

He tells Savile he has not written, but not because

he has had no answer to his October letter: "I seldom stand upon such ceremonies, and never with those who have obliged me, as you have done. The truth is, some of your friends and mine were so entangled in business then upon the stage, that I could say nothing to the purpose without mentioning them, and the parts they had taken on themselves were such as I was unwilling to relate. The result of all this is that the Lord Sunderland is out of his place and the Council: the Lord Conway succeeds him, and hath the seals. Essex is also put out of the Council and lieutenancy of Hertfordshire upon presenting a petition from the Lords. Godolphin hoped to have had the honour of accompanying them in their disgrace, but Temple only hath it."*

"The fruit expected from the last Parliament having been lost by little underhand bargainings" (those with the Duchess of Portsmouth apparently), "and, as some say, the King and Parliament equally deceived by those that were trusted by them, men's minds seem to be filled with various conceits and many jealousies.

"Some think the writs for calling the Parliament are in themselves void, as being without advice of Council; and that the law takes notice of nothing done by the King, *sine sapientum et magnatum consilio;* or that, if it should meet at Oxford, its acts would be void, or subject to be vacated for want of the freedom of voting which

* Godolphin, "never in the way, and never out of the way," was likely to be kept by Charles as long as he could keep a respectable minister. He was suspected of being a Papist. His wife, Evelyn's great friend, who died a few years before, had been "that contradiction in terms—a pure and pious maid of honour."

is essential unto it. Others say the validity of the writs depends solely upon the person of the King, and that others ought to think themselves safe where he is safe—though their danger be from him. I know not what this will produce, but I never saw men's minds more heated than at present, and cannot think that portends less evil than the comet!"

He speaks of the false returns; how at Amersham, Cheyney and Drake were declared elected, while Sidney and Hill had most votes; of the Duke of York; of the new set of men coming into power, from whom his pen cannot be refrained from writing sarcastically: "Notwithstanding all that has been said, we good subjects hope all will go perfectly well. His Majesty, as is said, resolves to reform his Court, that all shall be of one mind."

Sidney passes in review Seymour, Conway, Ranelagh, Jenkins, Hyde, Feversham, Dumbarton, and Thanet, praising them ironically for their excellent qualities. "Patterns of the genius of the nation," we shall "rest secure under their shadow. . . . Civil and military affairs being thus settled, treasures flowing in to us on all sides, and all foreign princes concerned in our affairs being sure unto us, we need not fear a few discontented lords, a mutinous city, or murmuring counties; and presuming that the vast magazine of arms made at Brest, and some that with a good quantity of ammunition were lately sent into Ireland, are in pursuance of agreements made with you, we cannot but think all will tend to our good."

The latter ironical paragraph refers to the uneasiness with which "men's minds" (as Sidney's favourite phrase goes) "were filled," on seeing each day more tokens of the good understanding with France, which the King evidently leant upon. How otherwise could he have resisted the power brought to bear against him? In what is probably one of the last of Sidney's letters to Savile, he speaks as we have before quoted of the glory of Louis, and says: "Even we that are afar from that fire are so much scorched by it as to expect not trouble, but ruin from it."

We have not of course given the whole of these letters, but our quotations have been perfectly fair, and we ask boldly whether any unprejudiced mind, which enjoys the liberty which Sidney longed for and could not make others understand was practical, either then or, as more truly, in the dim future at which we have arrived, could possibly continue to believe in the Sidney of tradition, so "bent upon a Republic," so "visionary," "devoid of practical sense," "turbulent," "connected with Shaftesbury's malignant agitation," a "hot-headed malcontent," the "blind partisan of France," the "ungrateful thinker," the "man forgetful of benefits," etc. etc.?

We shall return to his political views. They were never published till after his death, and we shall follow that order in examining them when we have told the story of those latter months and the undeserved punishment, which others, equally exaggerating perhaps, glorified into a martyr's death.

"Here is Mr. Sidney sainted!" cried Jeffries in-

dignantly, after his execution. And it is quite true that his death cast a halo round him, and his "meekness," foreign to his nature,—but really as Fox, I think, says, the behaviour of a man who knows he is suffering, "not for his fault, but for his virtue,"—gave him a posthumous popularity among a party for whom his theories were really far too advanced and liberal, which he never would otherwise have enjoyed.

But to Sidney himself the quick death would not seem a subject of pity. "Death is common to all," is the first platitude of life, and in those days "a violent death is probable to all who take interest in politics," was quite as much a part of its routine.

In his "Discourses" he says: "The most eminent are always most feared, as the readiest to undertake and most able to accomplish great designs. This eminence proceeds from birth, riches, virtue, or reputation, and is sometimes wrought up to the greatest height by a conjunction of all these. But I know not where to find an example of such a man who could long subsist under absolute monarchy. If he be of high birth, he must, like Brutus, conceal his virtue and gain no reputation, or resolve to perish, if he do not prevent his own death by that of the tyrant. All other ways are ineffectual; the suspicions, fears, and hatred thereupon arising are not to be removed; personal respects are forgotten; and such services as cannot be sufficiently valued must be blotted out by the death of those who did them.

"Various ways may be taken, and pretences used, according to the temper of times and nations; but the

thing must be done; and whether it be coloured by a trick of law, or performed by a mute with a bowstring, imports little."

Sidney prophesied the fate of himself and his friends in these words.

We shall pass briefly over the course of events by which the Crown conquered its opponents. Some indication of this is necessary, or we cannot arrive at Sidney's position. An elaborate description would take up much space, add nothing that would be new to students, and would not after all give us much of the personal history of Algernon Sidney.

Parliament met, and was dissolved in eight days, March 21–28, 1681, and in that time it is to be owned it placed itself in the wrong, or rather took up a position exposed to attacks on every side. The most absurd compromise suggested was that the Duke of York should have the crown on condition that he should not come within five hundred miles of his dominions. So it went on. The Crown had an intelligible ground to appeal to the nation on. "Church and King" is a better rallying cry than "Liberty," to a sober people; the latter, truly enough, is looked on with much suspicion, seeing that it is raised by the noblest, and supported by the vilest, of political agitators. Shaftesbury endeavoured to supply the want of a definite object for the Whigs, and in so endeavouring lost the sympathies of the best among them, exactly in proportion as his popularity rose among the crowd.

Charles had gained his point. The faggots were

becoming separated. Sidney notes that "the Lady Portsmouth is said to have entirely recovered her lost favours" with the King. Some extraordinary revelations were made even in the short sitting of Parliament, as to how England was governed, by means of the case of Fitzharris, on account of which the two Houses came into collision. Sidney was disgusted with the parts played by those whom he knew. Fitzharris, an informer, was the cousin of Mrs. Wall, the confidential maid of the Duchess of Portsmouth, and one of the subjects that was interrupted by the abrupt dissolution, was an inquiry into this intrigue, in which the names of Sunderland and Howard are not much to be honoured.

The House of Commons had mustered in strength, supported ominously by processions and pamphleteers, it had begun its work in high, almost too presumptuous temper. Charles made a remarkably judicious speech, allowed it time to circulate, to permit the Commons to show their temper; while he had talked of little but the new building in which they were to meet as soon as it was prepared, without warning he sent them down and left them to take their own way home, and almost fled to Windsor.

The King justified his conduct in his Declaration, and Algernon Sidney made notes for his friends, Jones and Somers, to write the "Vindication of the Last Two Parliaments." Sidney never looked on this as his own work, and at his trial said that he had never published a line in his life. It is very clear and reasonable, but it did not cause any great sensation. It was

"an extraordinary sharp and cold spring, whilst the whole nation was in the greatest ferment." Having put down his Parliament, Lord Shaftsbury remained the chief point of danger to Charles. Lord Howard was already arrested on the information of Fitzharris. As Burnet says: "Algernon Sidney took his concerns and his family so to heart, and managed everything relating to him with that zeal and that care that none but a monster of ingratitude could have made him the return he afterwards did." Burnet can never be accused of partiality for Sidney, so this is rather less to be discounted than many of his statements. But Shaftesbury escaped, and triumphantly, for a time. He was arrested on a "charge of suborning false witnesses to the Papist plot," but the jury threw out the bill against him, and Dryden signalised the occasion by one of his keen pieces of satire.

Yet that was the turning-point of his success. Howard was released in October, and the two, together with their City friends, "plunged desperately into conspiracies with a handful of adventurers as desperate as himself;" but Shaftesbury's career was closed. The King triumphed, as his chief opponent left the country, reaching Amsterdam only to die there in February, 1682–3.

It may be doubted whether the moderate Whigs, as they now were called, were not as much relieved as the King when Shaftesbury had been safely put out of the way.

But they had now to look to themselves. 1682 was an evil year for them; Sir William Jones was a loss to

the central party, and his death a personal grief to Sidney, whose story now becomes linked with that of Lord Russell's by political sympathy, and with that of Essex, as his kinsman and friend.

Scotland and the City felt the King's power; the voice of the country was in his favour; and when, by illegal means and extraordinary procedure, Tory sheriffs were elected for the City, the Whigs knew their time was come to suffer. Why should party names mislead us here? Is there a modern Tory who can approve of those who first bore his name? Can he not join with a modern Whig in believing that, as Lord John Russell said in 1820, "The year which began with the death of Shaftesbury was nearly fatal to the liberties of England." Is there any Churchman who cannot recognise that the clergy made a mistake, after all, in which they only showed that they represented the diminishing majority of the nation, when they refused toleration and preached up passive obedience?

Shaftesbury had represented the party of active resistance, the Tories that of passive obedience; between them lay the hope of the nation, those who may be described as in favour of passive resistance.

This was in effect the attitude of the Whigs, and in particular that of Lord Russell. It is difficult to know how much and how little to believe of the Council of Six: in a certain sense it did not exist, but at the same time there was a nucleus round which the better men of the old party would gradually have formed. Russell, Essex, Sidney, and Hampden, were marked out by

their opponents as the "tallest poppies;" Monmouth was dangerous on his own account because he had been the tool of Shaftesbury; Howard was implicated by proof or suspicion in every scheme of resistance. He had been in dark communications with the King, with Lady Portsmouth, with Bethel the Republican sheriff, with Lord Grey, with Shaftesbury himself, and now, by a strange mistake, or from the idea that all tools are good to work with in a desperate cause, he, with his bad character and infamous life, though a "canting Nadab" and a pleasant talker, was allowed to be the means whereby, as the King said, he could gain his final victory over the Country Party.

The proceedings of the King, and of these leading opponents, are alike uncertain. We can only generalise after taking the greatest trouble to examine details.

It was the aim of the Court to find some pretext for the destruction of the Whigs. It was the aim of the Whigs to resist in some way the encroachments of the Crown. But, though they corresponded with the Prince of Orange, who came to England in 1681, though they did undoubtedly look forward to a day when rebellion might be a duty, and endeavour to prepare for it by collecting information in Scotland, Holland, and throughout England, wherever it was safe, they had no ripened plans, no intention of forcing a civil war, and certainly no views against the person of the King. "Even the King knows," said Sidney, "I am not a man to have any such design, and I am no more capable of it than of eating him, if he were dead."

Lord Russell and the others were of the same opinion. It was impossible to touch them by ordinary means, and yet from the point of view of the Crown, it was absolutely necessary to do so.

If we look at it from the side of the Crown we must see how natural and how admirable were the means employed to gain its end. Arbitrary government was the King's undoubted object; that he could not set up, but, as Russell expressed it, by "wading through blood." It was only a question of a few more lives and then the end might be trusted to gain itself and the nation to settle into that state of torpor which was the natural result of feverish excitement. Those who think that the Crown was in the right in its final object are justified in defending the means whereby dangerous enemies were to be destroyed, and where a whole constitution was to be eventually altered, a few legal faults did not matter.

Yet some pretence had to be found for the first arrest of the leaders. The Court could afford to be aggressive now. Sidney says: "Sham plots were fastened upon me . . . . other ways were invented to vex and ruin me. When I only looked over a balcony to see what passed at the election of the Sheriffs of London I was indicted for a riot."

"In April last I was told by a person of eminent quality, virtue, and understanding, that I should infallibly be made a prisoner. I asked upon what pretence. He alleged some things that were entirely frivolous, relating unto vile persons whose names and

faces I did not know, but concluded some or other would be found; and that if I was once taken it would be impossible to avoid condemnation before such judges and juries as I should be tried by."

This was quite true. No one doubts it now, or looks on this latter statement as one made by a prisoner to excite false sympathy. The net was being cleverly drawn round the intended victims. All the outlets were being carefully closed, juries packed, judges selected, the people prepared to condemn the rights which were too abstract for them to understand, since those who work for liberty work like Nature herself, mysteriously, gradually, and for the future, and, when it was quite time, application would be made to those who had learnt to manufacture plots and provide witnesses of anything at any time. Of course such creatures could not flourish except under a corrupted Government; though, happily, our little island was not a vast empire just emerging from barbarism, we have not to look out of the present century to find illustrations of a like state of things.

But the Government had not to trouble itself to manufacture a plot. One was made ready to hand, among the extreme and insignificant Whigs, which was capable of being extended for the purpose required.

There were four plots to be taken into account, and it was the difficulty of blending them together that the Crown had to face, leaving to posterity on the other hand a different puzzle,—to disentangle them.

There was the Rye House plot, real in some particulars; there was the Government plot, which used

this plot as a basis for a counter-plot; there was the plot of those who were plotted against by the plot of the Government, plus the Rye House plot, which they did not plot; and there was their own plot, which the Government suspected them of plotting but could not find out that they plotted, yet which prejudiced these honourable plotters by preventing them from repudiating all connection with any plot. This lucid explanation will no doubt commend itself to the reader. It was said after the Revolution, King William's coming was no more than "the continuation of the Council of Six." While absolutely denying the charges brought against them, the patriots were most unwilling to afford the Government any information which might hurt their cause. Since they must suffer, it was better to suffer unjustly for treason than to expose their constitutional plans, vague even to themselves, to the fury of the Crown.

We are proud to think that Russell and Sidney were as morally guilty ("*Guilty! do you call that guilt?*" we echo his words) as they were legally innocent—innocent, because they did not do what they were accused of doing, and also because there was barely legal fiction enough to secure condemnation for Russell, and still less could be devised to prejudice Sidney.

His trial is not only separate to Lord Russell's in point of time, but rests on somewhat different ground, so that a very few words will be sufficient to recall the general circumstances of the case.

At the end of April, 1683, Russell and Sidney

received warnings of their danger. Russell had attended a meeting which, to some of those concerned, might have been treasonable in January; and the same men who were there, with others, had certainly some plots about assassinating the King. Rumsey and West were concerned in this plot, but, as they told all they could know or invent without attempting to make terms for themselves, it was suspected that they were in collusion with the Court. Sham discoveries of this April plot were going on, when, as was arranged, accidentally to all appearances, the names of Russell and Monmouth were mentioned by Keiling, thereby establishing a connection between the Rye House plot, false or true, and the leading Whigs.

The behaviour of the implicated men showed at once their innocence and their apprehension. Every one of them thought that his death was determined on, and not one would go out of the way, in case he might compromise his friends, his honour, and his cause.

Sidney says of himself: "About the middle of June the town was full of rumours of a plot said to be discovered by Keiling and, not long after, by West. Some persons fled, and a proclamation issued to have them apprehended. My name was in every coffee-house, and several informations were given me that I should certainly be seized. I mentioned this to several persons, but knowing no reason why I should absent myself, resolved not to do it."

This is no bravado. The innocence of Sidney on this occasion has been acknowledged even by those, not

contemporaries, who are opposed to his politics in every way. Evelyn says, on the 13th of July: "Every one deplored Essex and Russell, especially the last, as being thought to have been drawn in on pretence only of endeavouring to rescue the King from his present counsellors, and secure religion from Popery, and the nation from arbitrary government, now so much apprehended; while the rest of those that were fled, especially Fergusson and his gang, had doubtless some bloody design to set up a Commonwealth, and to turn all things topsy-turvy. Of the same tragical principles is Sidney."

He is here associated with Fergusson, which is a mistake, as we know; but that there were two bands of men among the Whigs is true enough.

Lord Russell was arrested first, and observing quietly "the devil is loose," resigned himself to the undeserved but inevitable fate. His trial began on July 13th; he was beheaded on the 21st July, 1683.

Lord Grey was allowed to escape from the Tower. Lord Howard turned informer. Hampden's trial was deferred till later, when he was condemned to pay a ruinous fine, but lived to see the revolution of 1688.

And Lord Essex? He was found dead on the morning of Lord Russell's trial, his throat cut. Earl Russell brings some circumstantial evidence to bear on the question as to how he met with his death, almost inclining to the view that he was murdered. Hallam thinks that he committed suicide, and will admit no doubt on that point. But there are doubts on both sides. The King or James would not personally have been guilty of the

murder, but there was no doubt that the event prejudiced the trial of Lord Russell, that Essex was one of those whom it was essential to destroy, and that there was no chance of obtaining his conviction. There is the indirect evidence of the children, of the sentry, of the pension paid to a suspected man for no other known possible cause, and that drawn from the high character of Essex, as acknowledged by the people. On the other hand, Essex came of an "ill-fated" family, his natural disposition was grave and melancholy, and Burnet, who had to examine the evidences at the time, is of opinion that he made away with himself. In either case his death was a blow to the Cause, and, if it had not been that he knew it could not matter to himself for long, would have darkened the last months of Sidney's life. By this time he was in the Tower, treated with the greatest severity possible to a man of his position.

CHAPTER X.

THE TRIAL AND EXECUTION. 1683. ÆTAT. 61.

> The virtuous man, who leads
> Invincibly a life of resolute good,
> And stands amid the silent dungeon deep
> More free and fearless than the trembling judge,
> Who, clothed in venal power, vainly strove
> To bind the impassive spirit.—*Shelley.*

To avoid repetition we shall take up the story of Sidney at his trial on the 7th, 21st, and 27th of November, at Westminster, before "the Right Hon. Sir George Jeffries, knight and baronet, Lord Chief Justice of England," *without* a jury of his peers, for of those empanelled many were not even freeholders.

Sidney had never, he said, "been at a trial before;" but the way in which he managed his defence recalled to the minds of the older men the days in which he had been on the examining committees of the House of Commons. He was, said Evelyn, "a man of great courage, great sense, and great parts." He was perfectly innocent, he had no one left who was very dear to him, he knew his life was to be taken, and so it was, that a calm serenity—rarely his during his

days of liberty—and perfect self-command gave him new claims to respect and admiration.

He was very lonely. The prospect, so far as he saw it, was dark for his country. Once again the sense of deep failure would darken his spirit.

He had been arrested on the 26th of June, and was sent to the Tower, after an examination before the Council of State, on a warrant from Sir Leoline Jenkins. The secretary in this matter fulfilled orders, but he had always been a personal enemy of Sidney's, and Sidney couples his name with that of his own nephew, Sunderland, once more in the favour of the King, in a passage which contains the few modern illustrations he gives of "corrupt creatures" about the person of a monarch. At the time this warrant was issued, "nothing of that which was pretended at his trial could be imputed to him;" but his goods were seized, the money at his banker's taken, and "his servants had not the liberty to carry him linen to change—about four months before the bill was found against him."*

Lord Halifax was pleased to obtain some relief from these grievances. Much he could not do, for the power and irresponsibility of the court, which could so treat an innocent—and a legally innocent—man, was not one with which it behoved a judicious man and minister to meddle.

* Sidney says this was contrary to the law of England relating to prisoners, and that he was treated with extreme violence, and kept with the most extreme rigour, almost to the danger of his life. Nor was he allowed to see his friends, all this while "in custodiam," not "in pœnam."

"On the 6th of November following, an order was sent to the lieutenant of the Tower to bring Colonel Sidney the next morning before the King's Bench, and he was accordingly brought into the palace yard of Westminster between ten and eleven of the clock, before the grand jury was assembled, and consequently they could not know whether the Bill would be found against him, unless," adds his servant Ducasse, who tells us this, "they had intelligence with the grand jury." The Bill was found, and he immediately hurried to the bar to be arraigned, "through a strong guard of soldiers."

The indictment was long and involved, and Sidney himself could not follow it. He had had aid in preparing his defence, but for all that must come he had to rely—as usual in cases of high treason, where the truth of the charge was not admitted—on his own quickness. His "arraignment was, for high treason, for conspiring the death of the King, and intending to raise a rebellion" in England. He was charged with conspiracy on the 30th of June, 1683, of plotting the King's death, of stirring up sedition in Scotland, and of writing a certain seditious libel.

On the bench was Jeffries, whose name, infamous character, and misused abilities, are too well known to need description. He was supported by Wythins, who also was often drunk on the bench, and, as Sidney alleged, was so during this trial, and by Holloway, not specially remarkable in this case. The Lord Chief Justice knew how to preserve his dignity when he chose, and indeed, when we read other trials where he pre-

sided, we see that in Sidney's case he was not very aggressive. The prisoner's death was decided on; consultations had already been had with the Crown lawyers as to "how it should be compassed." Burnet says that they hoped to make Sidney lose his temper; but his opponents did not know his nature. The trial resolved itself into a duel between Jeffries and Sidney, but the latter "seems to have inspired Jeffries with some respect." However this may be, it is certain that far from even permitting the prisoner to make a good defence, he prevented his raising any important point of law.

We know that Jeffries was only formidable when he was perfectly safe. He had shown, and did show, himself a coward; though the nursery formula, "a bully is a coward," is not always true, the abusive cruel temperament is one which often shows a remarkable sensitiveness to fear, and quickly knows its master. It were, however, absurd to suppose, as some have done, that Jeffries was afraid of Sidney; that he showed him any "courtesy" is equally untrue; that, on the whole, he confined himself to ordinary hostility may doubtless be said without much fear of contradiction.

Sidney took exception to the indictment. He was advised by Serjeant Williams, who was reproved by the Chief Justice for aiding him. The judges said that they could hear nothing till he had pleaded; but if he pleaded to the indictment he accepted the bill as good; or, if he would demur, and accept counsel, he by that confessed his guilt. He must answer or demur, and,

said Jeffries, "If you do not one or the other, judgment passes as if you had pleaded." These were, as Sidney said, "dark and slippery ways." Jeffries remarked on precedents, to which Sidney replied: "My lord, I do not pretend to anything but what is law, and due to every man on English ground. I should be very sorry to do that which was hurtful. . . . Why, then, if you drive me upon it, I must plead."

Jeffries observes contemptuously: "I am sure there is no gentleman of the long robe would put any such thing into your head." But Sidney, by pleading, formally acknowledged the correctness of the indictment, and took upon himself his defence, which he was allowed a fortnight's time to prepare.

There was none of the dramatic interest that had attended the late Lord Russell's defence, aroused by his personal popularity, and still more by his wife's devotion. Yet when the trial began on November 21st, there were present a good many of Sidney's sorrowing friends, who had come to see how he bore himself.

He was very self-possessed and collected. In the solemnity of the inevitable doom for himself, typical of that which he believed was falling on his country, the petty insults of Jeffries were almost unremarked. The smaller pieces of injustice were lost in the whole persecution. "For," as Fox says, "the proceedings in Sidney's case were still more detestable" than in Russell's; they "exhibited such a compound of wickedness and nonsense as is hardly to be paralleled in the history of judicial tyranny." The points which lawyers

dwell on as specially illegal were the refusal of a copy of the indictment; the hearsay evidence permitted; the admission of one witness of doubtful credit, instead of two, as expressly required; the want of support of even mis-statements in the facts alleged; and, for the libel, that it was not proved to have been written, and that it certainly was never published, nor even read to the jury; and, as to the behaviour of the judge, Sir John Hawkes remarked: "Almost all the circumstances of this trial are originals." But in this Sidney was giving an exact and living illustration of his own words in his "Discourses," in which, in many passages, he shows "how the tallest poppies are cut down." May we not suppose that he had that which he calls in one place the solace of the bitterness of death—"the hope of a glorious memory and the content of a well-satisfied mind"? For he said: "Some that were present affirm that he (Jeffries) acknowledged the late pretended plot did not affect me; but I confess that I think myself obliged to him in nothing but that he seemed to lay most weight upon the Old Cause, with which I am so well satisfied as contentedly to die for it."

Colonel Sidney desired a copy of his indictment, and says he thought the law allowed him to have it before, but, being in a hurry carried first to a tavern, then "led through soldiers, and surprised absolutely," he could not give the reason on which he grounded his request. He appealed to the Statute 46 Edw. III., and to several precedents; and observed that to him it was especially necessary to know his charge, there never

perhaps having been one so long and so confused. Jeffries replied that he had heard the indictment in Latin, which neither Sir Henry Vane nor Lord Russell did. "We must not spend our time in discourses to captivate the people," he concluded; and after the jury were sworn in, he observed: "Let us have a fair trial, in God's name!"*

The indictment was read again, and the Attorney-General opened the case for the prosecution by informing the Court that he "hoped to prove that there was a design among some men to assassinate the King, after having libelled him; but that others would do it in a more fair and genteel way. They thought it below persons of that great quality, as the prisoner is, and therefore were for doing it by open force." The prisoner was "looked upon as a very eminent person, whose education abroad and former practices at home had rendered him fit to advise and proceed in such affairs." The prosecution would prove who he was, what he did, and what he intended to do; and that his particular province was to send an agent into Scotland to stir up rebellion there. He had written a traitorous treatise—"the whole book is an argument for the people to rise in arms and vindicate their wrongs. He lays it down that the King hath no authority to dissolve Parliament; but it is apparent that the King hath dissolved many, etc."

* The objections which Sidney urges in his "Apology," and speaks of to his friends, have been struck out of the State trials; they referred to the scandalous packing of the jury.

"Gentlemen," said the Attorney-General, as he concluded, "if we prove all these matters to you, I doubt not but you will do right to the King and kingdom, and show your abhorrence of those republican principles which, if put in practice, will not only destroy the King, but the best monarchy in the world." West appeared next; he was one of those concerned in the Rye House plot. Sidney asked if he were pardoned. Jeffries set aside this objection. He was told to state what he knew of the general insurrection. Sidney rejoined: "What he knows concerning me." Jeffries interfered, and protected the witness in his evidence, which was partly general, partly on hearsay, but calculated to prejudice the jury; though even this man concluded: "As to the prisoner in particular I know nothing; nor did ever speak with him," till since the discovery. Colonel Rumsey narrated some irrelevant facts about Shaftesbury's plot, and a meeting at West's chambers; and then asserted, with curious inconsistency, that West could say more about that, and other treasonable meetings, than he could. That six of the great men were managing a business for the insurrection in Scotland he had heard from Mr. West; but they had no discourse about those gentlemen.

"My lord," said Sidney, "I must ever put you in mind whether it be ordinary to examine men, upon indictment of treason concerning me, that I never saw nor heard of in my life."

Jeffries replied: "I tell you all this evidence does not affect you, and I tell the jury so;" to which Sidney

rejoined truly, "But it prepossesses the jury." Keiling, the original informer of the Rye House plot, then spoke about an insurrection, and added that Mr. Goodenough said that Colonel Sidney, "whom I do not know, had a considerable part in the management of that affair."

In a conspiracy there must be confederates, as the Attorney-General observed. Having perhaps, satisfactorily proved, in the manner we have seen, that Sidney conspired with persons whom he did not happen to know, but about something which neither the prisoner nor the witnesses could define, at least having inspired the jury with a sense of uncomfortable belief in a vague plot,—Lord Howard was called next.

It would be most interesting if we could know the real truth of Howard's character and statement. His life was infamous and his word was worthless; but some have thought that he was doing his best for Sidney as his friend, and that his behaviour was the natural result of the position of danger in which he found himself. It may have been so. If he had no gratitude for any one else, at least Sidney's kindness might have won his heart; but from the manner in which Sidney used the past against him and spoke of him afterwards, we may conclude that even he had ceased to believe in him. Lord Howard told his story easily this time. It reads like a carefully prepared speech, and we know that even Lord Russell, who considered him a rogue, had said that they all enjoyed listening to him. We must allow for the training he had had, for we know that artists in any department at length do the most difficult and artificial

work with the greatest ease, but the effective manner in which he disposes his evidence in itself tells against him.

The story of the last months of Sidney's life, as given by Howard, was that he, Monmouth, and Sidney, had agreed to reorganise an enterprise that had been long in hand, that Monmouth should win over Russell and Salisbury, and Sidney should get Essex and Hampden. Sometime, in the middle or end of January, a meeting was held at Mr. Hampden's house, at which they agreed to consider how Shaftesbury's schemes were to be carried on, how to get money for purposes of a rising, and to see what was being done in Scotland. There was a second meeting of the same people at Southampton House a few weeks later, when Colonel Sidney proposed Aaron Smith "as a fit man to be entrusted with messages to the most leading men of the interest in Scotland." Howard supposed a letter was written by Lord Russell to Sir John Cockran, and declared that when he was with Sidney, a few weeks later, the latter had taken out about sixty guineas, saying that they were for Aaron Smith. Once, afterwards, Sidney said that Smith was at Newcastle. Did Aaron Smith go? Howard said, "I know nothing but by hearsay."

Aaron Smith, it may be observed, had been arrested, and declared that he had no evidence to give which would hurt a hair of Sidney's head, and this he maintained throughout a rigorous imprisonment.

When Lord Howard had finished, Lord Jeffries said: "Will you ask him any questions?"

From the first Sidney had refused to ask any question. He had given the Council such answers as he "had thought might have discharged him, with all the respect I could," he says, "without prejudice to the truth." Another says: "He treated them roughly and told them that he would give them no information; if they had anything to bring against him, he would then defend himself." Both of these statements are reconcilable one with the other.

The evidence of Lord Howard was expected to have made Sidney lose his temper, and it was hoped that in the personal encounter between him and his false friend sparks might be struck which should light up the darkness in which the real plans of the opposition were still concealed. Sidney's contempt for Howard was shown afterwards, but to Jeffries' endeavour to detain Howard in the box, backed up by Wythins, Sidney gave no aid. The Chief Justice had to say, "Will you ask him any questions?" Sidney replied quietly, "I have no questions to ask him." That meant that Howard's evidence, so far as it went, might be taken for what it was legally worth, but the Attorney-General remarked, to cover their evident disappointment at the failure of the only piece of evidence, true or false, bearing on that part of the case at all: "Silence, —you know the proverb."

The next point was to prove that Scotchmen came up to London. This was done. There was a *bonâ-fide* scheme on foot for colonising Carolina, and information was doubtless acquired from these men as to affairs in

Scotland; but the prosecution failed to show that their visit to England in April had anything to do with Sidney. He said afterwards: "I have not sent myself, nor writ a letter into Scotland, never since the year 1659; nor do I know one man in Scotland to whom I can write, nor from whom I ever received one. . . . If any man can prove I have had communication with them, I will be glad to suffer."

This concluded the case against him for high treason. Witnesses were next called to prove that he wrote a treasonable pamphlet, as another "overt act."

Sir Philip Lloyd was sworn, and gave his account of Sidney's arrest and the seizure of his papers very briefly.

The full details were that Sidney was, as usual, at home on the morning of June the 26th, employed upon his studies or with his friends; and at dinner-time he was arrested and his papers examined. On his table lay some sheets of a "Treatise on Government." They had been written long before, but apparently he had begun to correct and review them. Sir Philip Lloyd took what he pleased, and asked Sidney to put his seal on "the trunk and pillowbear" which contained his spoils. Sidney, knowing how plots were managed, refused to do this; but had a promise that the trunk should not be opened except in his presence. This not being done, or any inventory being taken, the prosecution had to show that Sidney had written the papers produced. His banker and men of business were called to prove that it was like his hand, which was not proof that it was his hand; and Sidney, though it might have been forged,

knew that it was his own. The passages were read. Then Jeffries said: "I perceive you have disposed of them under certain heads; what heads will you have read?" "My lord," said Sidney readily, at once perceiving his drift, "let him give an account of it that did it." This once more baffled his accusers. Howard was asked if he was a witness at Lord Russell's trial, and Lord Russell's conviction was read as evidence, which it is acknowledged did not bear on the prisoner's case, unless conspiracy had been proved. As Sidney observed: "They have proved a paper found in my study of 'Caligula and Nero.' That is compassing the death of the King, is it?"

The Chief Justice on Sidney's demand, said that he was indicted on the first branch of the Statute of 25 Edward III. If he could show that he had not conspired and compassed the death of the King, his acquittal was of course secure under ordinary circumstances.

The defence of Sidney had been carefully prepared, and he had easy work in demolishing the "flimsy cobwebs spun round him." The paper had not been proved to belong to him, though said to be found in his house, "and we know what similitude of hands is in this age," consequently that did not concern him. As to levying of war, which is not what conspiring the death of the King is—that is to say, treason—according to statute laws, there must be two witnesses. In another case it was stated soon afterwards that "Mr. Algernon Sidney . . . was a man that had that love for liberty and the good of his country that he would not have said so, not

to save his own life, if he had thought it inconsistent with either of them."

But as regarded even the one witness, Sidney proceeded to argue on the discrepancies and absurdities of his evidence.*

A select Council? Who selected them? By ties of friendship? They scarcely knew one another. Sidney hardly was acquainted with Monmouth personally, and had nothing to do with Shaftesbury. This point has been fairly proved in the historical sense. As to the witnesses, perjury is encouraged, when men are allowed to give witness to different facts, when it is difficult to discover how they are telling the truth, and if they know that they are safe from punishment. Jeffries acknowledged "that if there are not two witnesses, as the law requires in this case, the jury ought to acquit you."

"Are there any more witnesses?" asks Sidney. Jeffries replies: "You must not think the Court and you intend to enter into a dialogue." Sidney rejoins: "Then I say, there being but one witness, I am not to answer to it at all."

"If you rely on that," replied Jeffries significantly, "we will direct the jury presently."

* Here we do not know the whole truth, but from Sidney's mouth we are sure of nothing but the truth. We may quote Lady Russell on Monmouth's rebellion, that she took that wild attempt to be a new project, not "linked in the least to the former design, if there was then any real one, which I" (Lord Russell's "second self") "think there was not, no more than (my own lord confessed) talk, and, it is possible, that talk going so far as to consider if a remedy to supposed evils might be sought, how it could be found."

On the point of levying war, Sidney asked whether any war had been levied. If not, it was not within the statute.

Then, he went on, Lord Howard ought not to be a witness at all. Even in his evidence he had contradicted all he had said before; he had incurred the penalty of high treason; he was Sidney's debtor to a considerable sum of money lent him, and his mortgage had been forfeited. "He is a very subtle man. At my Lord Russell's trial he carried his knife, he said, between the paring and the apple; and so this is a point of great nicety and cunning at one time to get his pardon, and at the same time to save his money." Against his testimony might be set his words on Sidney's arrest. "Aaron Smith is destroyed for want of proof. Then, if the cabal for raising rebellion did meet, was it not curious that by Howard's own confession it should neglect to discuss the subjects of money, men, place, and time for such a great undertaking?"

As for the book it was a philosophical treatise; what if he had written it? "If a commoner of England writes his present thoughts, and another man upon looking on his book writes his present thoughts of it, what great hurt is there in it?" Jeffries bursts in: "You are to make your defence touching a book that was found in your study, and spend not your time and the Court's time in that which serves to no other purpose than to gratify a luxuriant way of talking that you have!"

Sidney observes he has seven or eight points of law to discuss. He is baffled by the three justices. He says

at length: "Truly, my lord, I do as little intend to misspend my own spirit and your time as any man who ever came before you." "Take your own method, Mr. Sidney," said Jeffries, wilfully misinterpreting him, "but I say if you are a man of low spirits and weak body, it is a duty incumbent on the Court to exhort you not to spend your time upon things that are not material."

The wrangling goes on. Sidney is forced into a reference to the Inquisition. Mr. Justice Wythins rebukes him. His witnesses are called. The summary may be given in the words of the "Apology": "The witnesses produced by me, were three eminent peers (Earl of Anglesey, Lord Clare, Lord Paget; the Duke of Buckingham was not subpœnaed, as desired), two gentlemen of great quality, cousins-german of the Lord Howard (Philip and Edward Howard), a doctor of divinity (Burnet), 'a French *gentleman*' (Ducas, or Ducasse, Sidney's personal attendant), 'two of my servants' (Penwick and Tracy), 'and a very considerable citizen' (Mr. Blake).

"Six of these did depose, that the Lord Howard, with hands and eyes lifted up to heaven ('canting Nadab'), and calling God to witness, had most solemnly declared he knew of no plot, believed there was none, took that which is mentioned to be a sham, invented by the priests and Jesuits, and the more dangerous for being a sham, because no man knew where it would end. Four of them said expressly, he had with the same asseverations declared his confidence that I knew of none, for that I was so much his friend, that if I

had known of any, I should have communicated it unto him."

Old Lord Anglesey's plain account, Mr. Philip Howard's garrulity, in which he mentioned that Howard had confessed he was under particular obligations to Colonel Sidney, Dr. Burnet's pithy sentence, Mr. Blake's mention of Lord Howard, saying he could not get his pardon till the drudgery of swearing was over, were allowed to pass by the Court; Mr. Edward Howard spoke frankly, and with evident respect for Sidney, and none for his cousin, and drew down rebukes from the Court. Three important witnesses did not appear for Sidney; Mr. Wharton observed that his handwriting was very easily imitable; and Sidney began his address to the jury.

This we need not follow. Sidney's case is summed up in his concluding words: "The first point you proved by my Lord Howard, who, I think, is nobody; and the last, concerning the papers, is only imagination, from the similitude of hands."

A final attempt was made by the Court, to entrap him into acknowledging his guilt, by accepting counsel on "the matter of fact," when his memory failed him on the legal question; but he finished his defence quietly, without attending to the false appearance of concern for his interest.

The Solicitor-General (Finch) replied. His address has been called "false in fact and false in law." That the statute did not apply to Sidney, was, he said, settled by the case of Lord Russell. Lord Howard's credit

was untouched by the witnesses. It was quite natural that Howard should deny that there was a plot, that he should think it very irksome, and call it drudgery to have to be a witness in it; that he had only offered Sidney the shelter of his house for his goods, and had not attempted to take them away for malice; and that no pardon had been yet granted to him, as it was insinuated. As regards the libel, it was traitorous; and it was written by the prisoner, to show that when kings break their trust, they may be called to account by the people. This was sufficient evidence of his "consulting the death of the King," the more dangerous because it was not on passion, but on principle, that it was thought of; "it is his reason, it is his principle, it is the guide of all his actions, it is that by which he leads and directs the steady course of his life . . . Gentlemen, we think we have plainly made it out to you, and proved it sufficiently, that it was the imagination of his heart to destroy the King, and made sufficient proof of high treason."

Sidney, acknowledging the right of final reply to rest with the King's counsel, asks permission to speak a very few words, and was permitted to refer to "Old Hale to show that compassing by bare words is not an overt act; conspiring to levy war is no overt act."

The summing-up of Jeffries was dead against the prisoner, though he began by asserting the platitude: "I had rather many guilty men should escape than one innocent suffer." His words read much more like a very irritating and truculent address for the prosecution in a

doubtful case than those of a summing-up by a Chief Justice of England. If counsel had spoken it, it would have been admired as extremely telling, full of suggestive allusions and subtle terms. He laid it down as an axiom that "if one man swore that he would with his knife kill the King, and another that he had of him bought that knife, it was sufficient evidence to commit any man." So then, it was considered to be taken for granted that Lord Howard had proved there was an insurrection talked of, and Sidney had written a book speaking of insurrection. Who else wrote it, if he did not? "So that on one side, God forbid but that we should be careful of men's lives; so on the other side, God forbid that flourishes and varnish should come to endanger the life of the King and the destruction of the Government."

"Mr. Justice Wythins added," says Colonel Sidney, "here is a mighty conspiracy, but there is nothing come of it. Who must we thank for that? None but the Almighty Providence. Had not Keiling discovered, God knows whether we might have been alive at this day."

"Then the jury withdrew, and in about half-an-hour's time returned and brought the prisoner in guilty. And the lieutenant of the Tower took away his prisoner."

Next day rumours were flying about as to other parts of the conspiracy. On November 24th, the Duke of Monmouth surrendered himself; but his action made it rather harder for Sidney than it had been before.

On the 26th, Algernon Sidney was brought to the bar to receive sentence. He gave as reasons why it

should not be passed against him, that he had had no trial before jurors that were freeholders, a point, "which I know concerns every man in England," a quibble that the King's title, "d.f." had been omitted in the indictment, and that the Duke of Monmouth ought to have been sent for. He was refused a hearing on some points "unless there be a law particular for Colonel Sidney," sneered Jeffries; he spoke of the jury, of the evidence which did not touch him, given by four witnesses, three of whom were under terror of death for treason; and as to constructive treason—Jeffries stopped him, and amidst some signs of discontent, laid down the famous dictum, "scribere est agere"—to write is to act.

"I must appeal to God and the world; I am not heard," replied Sidney.

"Appeal to whom you will," said Jeffries. "I wish with all my heart . . . . that you would appeal to the great God of Heaven and consider the guilt you have contracted."

He then, with other highly moral sentences, observed: "Mr. Sidney, you are a gentleman of quality, and need no counsel from me; if I could give you any, my charity to your immortal soul would provoke me to it. I pray God season this affliction to you." He pronounced the usual barbarous sentence, to which Sidney responded in an exclamation, which, coming from him meant that his whole soul was wrung by injustice. "Then, O God, O God, I beseech thee to sanctify these sufferings, and impute not my blood to my country."

"I pray God to work in you a temper fit to go into

the other world, for I see you are not fit for this," said the Chief Justice.

"My lord," replied Sidney, "feel my pulse" (holding out his hand), "and see if I am disordered. I bless God I never was in better temper than I am now."

Some efforts were made to save him. But they were fruitless. He even addressed a petition to Charles, showing how he had been forced, contrary to law, to come to a general issue on the case, etc.; that the papers produced were not fit for the press, "being only the present crude and private thought of a man;" "that the jury was hurried into a verdict they did not understand." "Your petitioner humbly prays that the premises considered, your Majesty will be pleased to admit him into your presence, and if he doth not shew that it is for your Majesty's honour and interest to preserve him from the said oppression, he will not complain, though he be left to be destroyed." This petition was presented, before sentence was given, on the 25th November. He was referred to the judges of whom he had complained.

He was persuaded that his death would be called in question, as he told his attendant Ducasse, to whom he gave his famous "Apology," or "Defence." This he employed part of his time in dictating. It is well worth reading; but, as we cannot give it all, and have referred to it from time to time, we need only say that it is most eloquent and convincing. His "Apology" and the evidence of Ducasse add many details to the report of the State Trials, which had been, as usual, corrected by those

interested. Justice Wythins "gave him the lie in open Court, to which Sidney replied, that, having lived above threescore years, I had never received or deserved such language, for that I had never asserted anything that was false."

Jeffries, on pretence of drinking a glass of sack, also followed the jury when they retired, and personally threatened them. He afterwards boasted that no man in his place had ever rendered unto any King of England such services as he had done. "In this," says Sidney, characteristically, "he seems to have spoken very modestly, for he might have truly said he had overruled eight or nine important points of law, and decided them without hearing, whereby the law itself was made a snare which no man could avoid, nor have any security for his life and fortune, if one vile wretch could be found to swear against him such circumstances as he required. . . .

"Yet, . . . God will not suffer this land where the Gospel hath of late flourished more than any other part of the world, to become a slave of the world; He will not suffer it to be made a land of graven images. He will stir up witnesses of the truth, and, in his own time, spirit His people to stand up for His cause and deliver them."

He also prepared a paper to be delivered to the sheriffs on the day of his execution. It began: "Men, brethren, and fathers; friends, countrymen and strangers, it may be expected that I should now say some great matters to you, but the rigour of the season, and the

infirmities of my age, increased by a close imprisonment of above five months, do not permit me. Moreover, we live in an age that makes truth pass for treason ; I dare not say anything contrary to it, and the ears of those that are above me will probably be found too tender to hear it. My trial and condemnation will sufficiently evidence this." He recapitulated his case, and spoke of his treatise as reasonable in itself, but "what was never known to those who are said to have conspired with me, was said to be intended to stir up the people in prosecution of the designs of those conspirators."

He concluded with an eloquent prayer: "Lord, . . . grant that I may die glorifying Thee, for all Thy mercies, and that at the last Thou hast permitted me to be singled out as a witness of Thy truth, and even by the concession of my opposers, for that old cause in which I was from my youth engaged, and for which Thou hast often and wonderfully declared Thyself."

In this mood he awaited the end. He had some conversation with Nonconformist ministers on religious matters. Two things surprised all who visited him, the serenity of his temper and the depth of his religious feelings. He had been often haughty and overbearing in manner, his sister Dorothy had called him turbulent, his family had never appreciated his sacrifices for their benefit, he had been accused of always contradicting those who differed from him. "A man," says Burnet, "of most extraordinary courage, a steady man, even to obstinacy, sincere, but of a rough and boisterous temper that could not bear contradiction. He seemed to be a

Christian, but in a particular form of his own ; he thought it was to be like a divine philosophy in the mind." We have seen his hopes and his disappointments, his noble, generous nature, his unswerving love of truth, and devotion to his country. His worst fault was most probably in his manner, for beneath the surface lay a singularly lovable and affectionate nature, endowed with pure, strong feeling and high intellectual powers.

In the hour when death was coming near him he showed himself as he really was ; perhaps as he might have been always, had he not been condemned to live a solitary life among crowds. The consecrated life is so often that of suffering and loneliness that none can know of, for "Thought, the strong angel with the implacable brow," drives her noblest votaries out to dwell in mental solitude, It is not now necessarily the thinker's doom to live apart and unappreciated, and the days when an innocent man can be condemned wilfully are, we trust, for ever past. As we think of the latter point let us rather dwell on the former, for the resignation necessary to face an unjust sentence is rarely required ; but to cherish high principle, courage, and love of what is true and good, through all vicissitudes of fate and fortune, to bear misrepresentation, and to look to the future as something which every one has a share in making better for those who come after him or her, can never be out of date. And may we not quote the words which Mr. Landor put into the mouth of Sir Philip Sidney as singularly appropriate to his great-nephew's career ?

"Why then grieve at folly or injustice in those who

have no concern in him, and in whom he has no concern? We are indignant at the sufferings of those who bear bravely and undeservedly; but a single cry from them," says Sidney, "breaks the charm that bound them to us. . . . Only one subject of sorrow, none of complaint, in respect to Court is just and reasonable, namely, to be rejected when our exertions or experience might benefit our country. Forbidden to unite our glory with hers, let us cherish it at home the more fondly for its disappointment, and give her reason to say afterwards, she could have wished the union."

And the words of Fox are as a corollary to Landor's: "Ample justice is done to the memories of Russell and Sidney, and the very sound of their names is still animating to every Englishman attached to their glorious cause."

Why should we dwell on Sidney's death? It had to be. He sent a petition, asking not for pardon, but to be allowed to dwell beyond seas. This appeal was not granted; but the sentence was commuted into simple beheading. The warrant was signed on the 4th December, 1683, and was brought to him by the sheriffs. "The world was nothing to him," he said. He seemed to belong to a higher sphere of beings as he asked them to consider what they had done in establishing injustice in their country. Others had had hopes of his escape—pardon is no word to use here—but he had never supposed it possible that he could be spared.

"On the 9th December," say the sheriffs, "we went into the lieutenant's coach, and there signed and sealed

counterparts of receiving him. We asked him if he had any friends to accompany him on the scaffold; he said none but two servants of his mother's. We conducted him on foot up to the scaffold. He said nothing in all his passage.

"As soon as he came up he said: 'I have made my peace with God, and have nothing to say to men; but here is a paper of what I have to say.' We asked him if he would read it or have it read. He replied, 'No; but if you will not take it I will tear it.' We asked him if it was his own handwriting, and he replied, 'Yes.' And so pulled off his hat, and coat, and doublet, and gave them to his servant, and said, 'I am ready to die; I will give you no further trouble,' and then gave three guineas to the executioner. The executioner seemed to grumble, as if it were too little; then he bade his man give him a guinea or two more, which he did."

We finish the story in Evelyn's touching words: "He was a man of great courage, great sense, great parts, which he showed both at his trial and death; for when he came on the scaffold he told them only that he had made his peace with God; that he came hither not to talk, but die, put a paper into the sheriff's hand, and another into a friend's, said one prayer as short as a grace, laid down his neck, and bid the executioner do his office." The man asked him, if he should rise again? as is customary in such cases. "To this he replied: 'Not till the general resurrection. Strike on!'"

There was a pause. Then the axe fell; and in this, at least, the evil fortune which had followed him all his

life ceased; for one stroke put an end to the existence which might have been, and was, though in a different fashion from that hoped for, such a blessing to the world and to his country.

> Yet was he not
> Wholly unhappy, but from out the core
> Of suffering flowed a secret spring of joy,
> Which mocked the drought of Fate, and left him glad
> And glorying in his sorrow.

The remains of Sidney were restored to his family and were laid in the vault at Penshurst, with the following inscription:

HERE LIETH THE BODY OF THE
HON. ALGERNON SIDNEY, ESQ.,
SECOND SON OF THE
RIGHT HON. YE EARLE OF LEICESTER,
WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE
ON THE 7TH DAY OF DECEMBER,
IN THE 61ST YEAR OF HIS AGE,
ANNOQUE DOM. 1683.

Not many years passed before his innocence was recognised. The Crown triumphed, but not for long. Though the Revolution of 1688 was not deserving of all the credit it has been given, it made good government a probability, instead of being, as it would have become in any other land but England, an impossibility. Then, not six years later, Sidney's attainder was reversed by an Act passed on the 13th February, 1688–9, at the petition of his brothers, and with the approval of all parties

who had a right to speak. He was treated as the martyr of his cause. A reaction set in. What were supposed to be his principles were exalted by all the Whigs. "The cause for which Hampden perished in the field, and Russell and Sidney on the scaffold," became a well-sounding rallying cry of a party. Though a halo surrounded his name, few cared to analyse the genius of his mind. Misunderstood in life by all except a few who knew him best; in death he became aetherealised into a glorious myth, or degraded into an obstinate, if disinterested, regicide. The real man—the philosophical politician, the political philosopher, who by constitutional means, which only in the last instance includes resort to arms by a majority of the nation, would have evolved slowly a commonwealth dependent on the spirit of liberty and mutual respect. In the early days of the French Revolution a new cry of enthusiasm for the principles of liberty was echoed in the hearts of ardent young Whigs; their thoughts turned back to the day when England was fighting for her freedom, and they read again and again—

> How, like a Roman, Sidney bowed his head,
> And Russell's milder blood the scaffold wet.

But "France had no such men as we had then;" and the horrible days of carnage "stained the white robe of Liberty;" and those who had cried:

> Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive;
> But to be young was very heaven!

turned away and shuddered.

Why did our revolutions differ from those days in France? Many pens set to work, many noble minds thought out the question in silence, and the result was more favourable to the cause of liberty than ever, since it showed that a people are just and reasonable in proportion as they have enjoyed the responsibilities of freedom.

From 1800 to 1830 were published histories and biographies which show how interested the world was in this question; but lately we see that they have to a certain extent to be re-written. We have new dangers to face; it is almost impossible that day shall ever arise "again in England when the despotic prince and the profligate minister shall again prompt the patriot of noble birth to die for his country," under the same circumstances as were found in the seventeenth century. We hope so. "No story is the same to us after a lapse of years; or rather, we are no longer the same interpreters;" and now, at last, to this story of Algernon Sidney we can bring a spirit which is in harmony with his; for his visionary commonwealth is a fact. He still preserves his comparative greatness, we still may look on him as one of England's noblest sons; but the tide of liberty is sweeping up to and even beyond his marks. We can now read his "Discourses," and, in the light shed on them by the history of our own time, know Algernon Sidney, not only as the patriot, but as the moderate man.

"When," said Fox, "the names of Russell and Sydney cease to be an object of respect and veneration, it

requires no spirit of prophecy to foretell that English liberty will be fast approaching its final consummation. Their deportment was such as might be expected from men who knew themselves to be suffering not for their crimes, but for their virtues."

And also, we may add, for their country and their cause. It is not only the cause of the Whigs, though to them belongs the honour of recognising these heroes, whose memories consecrated their theories; it is the cause of England and the cause of the world which can accept the life and death of Algernon Sidney as given for it. And when we think how at a critical period of the world's history, political wisdom practically rested with the few in one small country, and how, very slowly, England and her colonies have expanded, influencing the whole world by example of civil and religious liberty, we cannot help honouring those names which stand first in order of time among our modern politicians.

CHAPTER XI.

HIS LITERARY WORK.

My faith is large in time.—*Tennyson.*

It is appropriate to speak of Sidney's writings when we have recorded his death, for, up to the time of his trial, he had, as he avows, never published a sheet. He stands, therefore, in the almost unique position of an author who never wrote, in the first instance, for publication, and whose works were all given to the world, without the benefit of his revision, long after the hand that had written them had perished. Only the excellence of his work could justify his claim to be, in the popular sense, "a man of letters." But he was a student to his heart's core. In reading his life, we are never quite sure whether, after all, he became a literary man by the force of circumstances throwing him back upon himself, or whether, if he had had his own way, and obtained the career he sought, he would so truly have developed his real nature, as an earnest, high-minded seeker after truth. The long hours spent in study, the earnest thought, the increased learning, the cultivated intelligence, were, as we should say, to a certain extent lost to

the world. His greatest production—a most noble one —was unfinished. We know not what he might have done had he been spared. His father died at eighty-two. Had Sidney had but ten years more of life, his work might have been at once reduced and enlarged. What there is, is in some respects too diffuse; what there is not, might have been supplied with the greatest benefit. We have seen that his toleration was not quite complete, as some may think; but the world would have been richer if he had been able to write out more fully his views on religious liberty.

We have already remarked on the "Essay on Virtuous Love." It was not published among the works collected by Hollis; and, in January, 1884, by an oversight, was announced as never having been given to the world. The mistake made by Mr. Ley was not regrettable, as the "Somers Tracts," in which collection it is included, are not accessible to every one. Hallam speaks of this essay with approval. In it we can trace the earlier characteristics of his style and the genius of his mind. He has the power of perceiving the ideal; he is striving to find what is lovely and what is true—synonymous terms with him—and he is looking through his own consciousness into the mystic spiritual world, which is the invisible kingdom. The essay is generally placed in the records of his career as belonging to the time of his retirement from public life, on Cromwell's elevation to the Protectorate. It is vigorously written, but, as every critic has remarked, it has not the direct force, and, on the whole, simple language, of his later writings.

The tractate on "A General View of Government in Europe," cannot, to our mind, as to that of Hollis, possibly be considered as written by Sidney. It is not like his work in style, method, or in information. If any part of it were his, for which we have no authority but an advertisement in 1744, it must have been so touched up by another hand as to have lost all its original characteristics. It would be very easy to prove six points at least on the negative side of the question, showing that Sidney could not possibly have used certain expressions and made certain references which are found in it; but it is not worth while to dispute a question which only those who are familiar with the cadence of Sidney's prose, and care to follow the history of minor scribblers, have any need to enter upon.

The "Vindication of the Two Last Parliaments," like the notes furnished to Penn, passed through other hands before they were given to the world. Sidney did not consider the former work his, though he inspired it.

His letters—such as are extant, though many valuable ones are doubtless lost—with his "Apology," dictated during his last hours and dated on the day of his death, have already been used as the chief materials for many parts of this narrative. As we have seen, they show an observant nature and are carefully written in good English. Their style is easy, and their information often valuable, both as indicating the refined and dryly humorous nature of the writer, and as furnishing us with materials for history. There is no trace in them of the involved sentences found in his early work and common

to most of the seventeenth-century literature, and there are perhaps not more than two or three allusions which might be left out were a reprint thought desirable. In such a case some attention should be paid to the dating of the letters to Savile, and references to contemporary writers would no doubt furnish us with examples of the truths of Sidney's portraits, with a few allowances for party prejudices.

The "Discourses on Government" were perhaps begun in comparatively early days. It is the sort of scheme which an author adopts as his own in youth and which becomes part of his life. His reading shapes itself into materials for his work, whether directly or indirectly; half-consciously, all that he sees around him gravitates to his central idea. His memory becomes trained to select at once what will be useful to his scheme, and eventually he writes from a mind which has been laid hold of by the idea, which has, as it were, been hovering in the air waiting for an interpreter. He becomes the willing slave of what seems to him more a revelation than a conception, a power external to himself, which drives him forward, through weariness and depression, through the days of toil which perhaps might be days of ease, scarcely able to explain to himself his own infatuation for that hard task-mistress, "Wisdom, the eldest daughter of the gods."

The scheme of Algernon Sidney was a mighty one for those days. The "Discourses" which we have, printed, make over five hundred pages quarto, on an average of five hundred and twenty words to a page. Burnet

observes that he was complimented by Sir William Temple on having patience to finish it, and there is no doubt that our patience has much exceeded Burnet's, that it is one of those voluminous books which need to be "read by the fingers," or to be "tasted," and because of its size has become forgotten by the world. This may account in part for the misrepresentation of its theories "by those who perfunctorily pass over authors of consequence, and only trade in their table of contents. These," says Fuller, "like City cheaters, having gotten the names of all country gentlemen, make silly people believe they have long lived in those places where they never were, and flourish with skill in those authors they never seriously studied."

Sidney has been, in one sense, unfortunate in his editors, not in their learning but in their opinions, which have been confused with his. Dr. Toland was the first. Swift asked who would have taken him for a wit if he had not had Christianity to attack, when the Dean sarcastically discussed the "inconveniences of abolishing" that form of religion. But of Toland we may rather say that he might have been taken for a "wit" if he had not been "so prompt at priests to jeer." He was a learned and painstaking man, who sought notoriety by the means which have secured for him oblivion. His labour in collecting the prose works of Milton deserves our gratitude. He was also the editor of some of the writings of Harrington, author of "Oceana," and in 1698 he published the works of Algernon Sidney, with the remark, which is appro-

priate to ourselves, that "the reign of a prince, whose title is founded upon the principle of liberty which is here defended, cannot but be the most proper, if not the only time, to inform the people of their just rights, that from a due sense of their inestimable value they may be encouraged to assert them against the attempts of ill men in time to come."

"It is not necessary to say anything concerning the person of the author. He was so well known in the world, so universally esteemed by those who knew how to set a just merit upon true merit, and will appear so admirable in the following discourses as not to stand in need of a flattering panegyric."

Dr. Toland further states that there were two answers to Filmer, this larger treatise and the lesser one, on part of which his sentence was grounded. These, then published, are genuine, written by his own hand; "His inimitable manner of treating this noble subject is instead of a thousand demonstrations that this work can belong to no other than the great man whose name it bears."

They were republished under Mr. Hollis' direction in 1750, and again in the best and most complete edition of his works and letters in 1772. In the first edition Mr. Hollis states: "It is one of the noblest books that ever the mind of man produced, and we cannot wish a greater blessing to the world than that it may be everywhere read, and its principles universally received and propagated." As a preface to that of 1772, Dr. Robertson states that he has examined and revised it while passing through the press, a most irksome labour, con-

sidering the number of errors in the original, which of course had not had the benefit of its author's review. Sometimes these were press errors, and sometimes Sidney had made mistakes "by taking his quotations at second hand." Except for the colouring, which others thought was imparted to the works by the advanced views of its editors, or that must be inherent in it, so powerfully to attract such men, Sidney has been fortunate enough to have his memory respected and his works honoured by those who have handled them. "Fit audience," he has found, "though few." With Coleridge, Landor, Emerson, and kindred, though various, spirits, he remains to teach those who have the humble, useful work, of interpreting the truths which the masters discover. A quainter critique will never be written on him than that of Coleridge, who came down to earth to observe of Algernon Sidney, "What a gentleman he is! His style reminds one as little of books as of blackguards!" To us, the second clause is a good deal less intelligible than some of the more difficult parts of his lectures; with the first we thoroughly agree.

He does remind one extremely of books, and of one book in particular, or rather of the series of books put forth by Filmer from 1646 to 1680, which nobody reads or wishes to read. However, it serves Sidney as Archbishop Whately used his friend, as an anvil to beat out his thoughts upon.

Savile was said to be one of the originators of the saying which used to be so much quoted till it was found to be only an important portion of truth, "that

religion and government were the only things which a wise man need concern himself about."

Sidney starts his work with the same definition in another form. What the best and wisest of men most desired was power, divided between the magistrates and the people. "In their opinion, such only deserved to be called good men who endeavoured to be good to mankind or to that country to which they were more particularly related. And inasmuch as that good consists in a felicity of state and perfection of person, they highly valued such as had endeavoured to make men better, wiser, and happier." The law must be above every man. The theory of monarchy, the one, be it observed, which was the actual object of Louis, and imitated, so far as Englishmen could allow, by Charles, is divine right by hereditary succession, to set which rule aside is not only inconvenient, but a crime, giving power of life and death over all subjects and their property. This theory is opposed to common-sense and to all the reason of philosophers and instincts of a free people. Sidney has easy work in showing how Filmer contradicts himself, and how he makes most ridiculous statements, as he in fact does in his zeal for monarchy.*

A prince should be trusted, says Filmer, because "an implicit faith is given to the meanest artificer." "I wonder by whom! Who will wear a shoe that hurts him because the shoemaker says it is well made?"

* We take Sidney's definition of monarchy, the unchecked will of one man—as in France, from 1655, practically, till the middle of the eighteenth century.

rejoins Sidney, who has just been running over a list of political writers, in which he says in effect he would rather err with Calvin, Buchanan, and Bellarmine, than be right with Laud, Mainwaring, Sibthorpe, Hobbes, Filmer, and Heylin.

By a happy turn of his familiar argument he shows that if trust is given to prince or artificer it must be because he is trustworthy. Now there are varieties of dispositions. Virtue is not common to all princes. Ministers are of no use to a weak or wicked prince, unless they have a power of acting independently, when government ceases to be monarchical. Princes choose those who are like themselves for honours. The wicked would utterly extirpate the good who passively obeyed a monster like Nero. "Our author confines the choice of the subject to acting or suffering." "But in those ages of the world, where there hath been anything of virtue and goodness, we may observe a third sort of men, who would neither do villainies nor suffer more than the law permits or the consideration of the public peace requires. These men . . . . were thought to have something of divine in them, and have been famous above all the rest of mankind to this day. Of this sort were Pelopidas, Epaminondas, Thrasybulus, Harmodius, Aristogiton, Philopoemen, Lucius Brutus, Publius Valerius, Marcus Brutus, Caius Cassius, Marcus Cato, with a multitude of others," and many scriptural examples.

But Sidney shows also that the theory of Filmer, that absolute kings and their people have interests which are always identical, is utterly absurd, and also exposes the

fallacy of asserting "that if, by the law of God, the power be immediately in the people, God is the author of a democracy," by replying, "And why not, as well as of a tyranny?" Sidney declares that "God has left all things to our choice that are not evil in themselves," and examines the scriptural authorities, which Filmer has misquoted, to prove that religion, as given in the Jewish Scriptures, is by no means in favour of monarchy, but of a commonwealth of many parts. Scattered through this portion of the argument are many pointed remarks, but we fancy that in printing a new selection we should not now trouble ourselves to inquire into the lives of Cush and Nimrod.

Mankind is free, but the liberty of one being thwarted by that of another, it must be given up by each for the good of all. This is Sidney's *theory of government*—commonplace of course in these days. The usual *forms of government* being democracy, aristocracy, and monarchy, Sidney observes, and we call particular attention to his words, which describe his commonwealth, that "the wisest, best, and by far the greatest part of mankind rejecting these simple species did form governments mixed or composed of the three." The right to choose the form of government did not depend upon the will of the king, but upon the people. If Filmer and his school asserted that hereditary succession was an indefeasible right of princes, they had to prove that no one had ever succeeded in ascending a throne otherwise than because he was associated with that right—which could not, after all, be universal, since there was a question as to who was

the nearest to the throne, son, mother, daughter's son, etc. Not being able to do this, and the practice of mankind not bearing them out in this, Filmer then asserted that the possession of the throne conferred divine right. Sidney retorts that this is a most dangerous doctrine and consecrates regicide, since who would object to doing one "detestable" murder if he was thereby raised "to a position which *ex officio* conferred spiritual as well as personal immunity? He prefers to continue to believe that princes, as well as other magistrates, were set up by the people for the public good." The argument of his first chapter is to prove that there is no divine law which commands, or any "privilege peculiarly annexed to any form of government, but that all magistrates are equally the ministers of good, who perform the work for which they were instituted, and the people who institute them" may consult their own good in choosing that which seems most convenient to themselves. No one will contradict these assertions, for what "passed for treason" has now become a platitude.

The next chapter shows the necessity of making a wise use of the liberty of mankind in choosing its own governors, and examines into the nature of the various kinds before spoken of. "The question is not whether it be a paradox or a received opinion that people naturally govern or choose governors, but whether it be true." Being true, why should they choose, and how?

"Virtue can only give a just and natural preference," that is, it must receive it; and it does not weaken

the position of those who are "heaven-sent" rulers, remarks Sidney, answering Filmer, anticipating Carlyle, for where "such a man or such a race of men appear in the world they carry the true marks of sovereignty upon them!" "But this will be nothing to the purpose till such a man or such a succession of men do appear," when "I could almost say it were better to serve such a master than to be free." But those who uphold the ordinary race of absolute monarchs must do it by other help than by the authority of Aristotle's writings on such a heaven-sent man. "I know not who that will be, but am confident he will find no help in Plato," which assertion he justifies by an argument of the same kind as his adversary employs: That Plato tried to examine forms of government; if that endeavour is considered contrary to law, his testimony can be worth nothing when his attempt breaks law in itself; as well as by a summary of the doctrine of the author of "The Republic." "Whenever Plato's monarch does appear in the world he ought to be accounted as sent from God for the benefit of that people. . . . It is good to consider that this is not a fiction. Moses, Joshua, Samuel, were such as they desire and were made so by that communion with God which Plato requires. And he in all his writings, intending the institution of such a discipline as should render men happy, wise, and good, could take no better way to bring his countrymen to it than by showing them that wisdom, virtue, and purity only, could make a natural difference among men."

Naturally, suggested alike by Plato and common-

sense, follows the remark that those who are fittest to exercise power are those who look upon it as a burden and responsibility, and therefore are slow to desire it.

He then argues from history and, as the most familiar to his mind, and as relied on by his adversary, chiefly from Jewish, but also from classical and English history, on the election of kings or governors, and the variety of means and judgments employed.

"I hope to prove," he says, after having reviewed those illustrations bearing on his purpose, "that of all things under the sun there is none more mutable or unstable than *absolute monarchy, which is all that I dispute against, professing much veneration for that which is mixed, regulated by law, and directed to the public good.*" He illustrates the effect of freedom upon a people by the stories of Greek and Roman history. "The same countries, since the loss of their liberty, have always been base, cowardly, and vicious." "The Romans, whose virtue and fortune did also perish with their liberty, never themselves conquered a free people without extreme difficulty." Nor did later experience contradict this, as proved by the example of free Venice, the Italian Republics, Holland, Switzerland, "the reputation to which England did rise in five years after 1648."

"But if virtue, and the glorious effects of it, did begin with liberty, it expired with the same, though so vast a body as that of the Roman Empire could not die in a moment."*

* Chapter ii., sec. 12, is a good specimen of Sidney's style, in powerful argument, rich style, and directness of language, to prove

"That peace only is to be valued, which is accompanied with justice; and those governments only deserve praise, who put the power into the hands of the best men." Which form does this? Sidney thinks that democracy "can only suit with the convenience of a small town, accompanied with such circumstances as are seldom found."*

"But if I should undertake to say, that there never was a good government in the world which did not consist of the three simple species of monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy, I think I might make it good." He refers to the mixed constitution of the government of the Hebrews, Sparta, Athens, and Greek cities generally, Rome, Genoa, Lucca, Germany, Hungary, Bohemia, Sweden, Denmark, and Poland. Where there has been change in the original constitution of those States, it has not been a change for the better. If the monarchical part was in the kings, consuls, archons, etc., "it cannot be denied that the aristocratical was in the senate or Areopagitæ, and the democratical in the people." All alterations are not for the worse. "And as the noblest work in which the wit of man can be exercised were, if it could be done, to constitute a government that should last for ever, the next to that, is to suit laws to present exigencies, and

"that the strength, virtue, glory, wealth, power, and happiness of Rome, proceeding from liberty, did rise, grow, and perish with it."

* It must be remembered, that distances were distances, and they are practically not distances now, as they were in Sidney's time. England is, for purposes of inter-communication, quite as small as was the city of Athens.

so much as is in the power of man to foresee. He that would resolve to perish obstinately in the way he first entered upon, or to blame those who go out of that in which their fathers had walked when they find it necessary, does, as far as in him lies, render the worst of errors perpetual." "There are some rules in politics, which ought always to be observed, and wise legislators adhering to them, only will be ready to change all others, as occasion may require, in order to the public good." Popular injustice is after all a name, said Sidney in effect, who himself had suffered under it, the people simply "deprived themselves of the benefits they might have received from the virtues of some excellent men, to the hurt of none but themselves."

Is it possible to help supposing that Sidney thought of Shaftesbury, when he described Themistocles as a man of great wit, industry, and valour, but of uncertain faith, too much addicted to his own interest, who held a most dangerous correspondence with foreign Powers, etc. ?

"Socrates, Mamercus, Camillus, Æmilius Paulus, were condemned unjustly, but their sentences were recognised as such afterwards. Coriolanus, Quintius, Manlius Capitolinus, deserved their fate;" for every action should be considered by itself, and a State cannot allow even heroes to do wrong with impunity. "Scipio thought his virtue should be so well known, that no account ought to be expected from him; an error proceeding from a noble root, but not to be borne in a well-governed commonwealth. The laws that aim at

the public good, make no distinction of persons, and none can be exempted from the penalties of them, other than by approved innocence, which cannot appear without a trial." Sidney surely goes too far, in denying that injustice has been done to great men under popular Governments; but he says, "We seek that human constitution which is attended with the least, or the most pardonable, inconveniences," and declares, proving his words, that in the free States many became laws to themselves, and those who could not originate, at least venerated, what was excellent in others.

But when once a State had become corrupted, "the best men found it as impossible to restore liberty . . . as the worst had done to set up a tyranny while the integrity of their manners did continue." And a great number of men always follow the side approved of by those in power. It is to the interest of absolute monarchies that their subjects should be weak, base, corrupt, unfaithful to each other, and given up to pleasure; his ministers must be those who care for his interests, which he takes care shall be theirs. "But popular and well mixed governments cannot be upheld except by virtue. . . . A people acting according to the liberty of their own will, never advance unworthy men unless it be by mistake, nor willingly suffer the introduction of vices." Sidney, however, prefers aristocracy to democracy, as, he says, did "Xenophon, Plato, Aristotle, Thucydides, Livy, Tacitus, Cicero, and others."

This brings him to consider "what are the restraints and checks on popular freedom? No wise man ever

sought liberty without restraint; but such as was restrained by laws tending to the public good; that all might concur in promoting it, and the unruly desires of those who affected powers and honours which they did not deserve, might be repressed." They "want a government that protects them from receiving wrong where they have not the least inclination to do any."

Now, "in a popular or mixed government, every man is concerned; every one has a part, according to his quality or merit; all changes are prejudicial to all; whatever any man conceives for the public good, he may propose it in the magistracy, or to the magistrate; the body of the people is the public defence, and every man is armed and disciplined; the advantages of good success are communicated to all, and every one bears a part in the losses. This makes men generous and industrious, and fills their heart with love to their country. Those only can be safe who are strong, and no people was ever well defended but those who fought for themselves. The best judges of these matters have always given the preference to those constitutions that principally intend war, and make use of trade as assisting to that end, and think it better to aim at conquest than simply to stand upon their own defence. To increase also is useless, or perhaps hurtful, if it be not in strength as well as in numbers." So much for external defence of the Commonwealth. Internally, legal proceedings are to be used when the delinquent submits to the law, and all are just when he will not be kept in order by the legal. "This applies to the chief magistrates." Whoever denies

to the people the right of self-defence, "does at once condemn the most glorious actions of the wisest, best, and holiest men that have been in the world, together with the laws of God and man on which they were founded."

But the worst enemies to popular governments are vice and poverty. Their internal tumults are much less frequent than those of great monarchies, and much less dangerous. As for virtue, in well-governed States "where no man is honoured except for such qualities as are beneficial to the public, men are from their tenderest years brought up in such a belief that nothing in this world deserves to be sought after but such honours as are acquired by virtuous actions." Thus virtue itself becomes popular. By what means do men rise, when, except for good princes, exceptions to the rule, an absolute monarch and his favourites, men and women, govern? Civil wars and tumults are not the greatest evils which befall nations; one should not "give the name of peace to desolation." Commonwealths produce the greatest number of valiant and industrious men; when innocence is safe, and virtue honoured, "they do not spare their persons, purses, or friends, when the public powers are employed for the public benefit. No country ever wanted great numbers of excellent men," when excellence obtains honour.

The character of the King is next considered, and it is shown, how he can rarely stand against his own temptations, and can seldom govern a whole people really well. "Did Samuel make a mistake when he said,

Will ye have this man to reign? Ought he not to have said, Wilt thou have this multitude to be a people? The people must have a share in the government; that does not make it a democracy, if it is composed of the three simple species." Sidney rather leans to his ideal, of a senate of men chosen for virtue and birth, in preference to any other simple species, but he strongly advocates mixed government. "Wise and good men will say with Moses, 'I cannot bear the burden;' and every man who is concerned for the public good, ought to let fools know they are not fit to undergo it. . . . They therefore, who place kings within the power of the law, and the law to be a guide to kings, equally provide for the good of kings and people."

Sidney devotes here some time to considering the question of the contract, explicit or implied, between rulers and governed; but the conclusion of this second chapter is lost.*

* One word of surmise may be permitted here. There are 32 sections in this imperfect chapter, as printed by Hollis, and edited by Dr. Robertson. In court secs. 35 and 37 were read, of what Toland supposes to be the lesser treatise, which has not been found. May it not reasonably be supposed that there was no other treatise? Sidney was beginning to correct this. There are various allusions in the work, to Sunderland, Jenkins, etc., which place it at a late date, and though he uses Nero and Caligula for his examples of despotic monarchs, he does so avowedly, because it was safest to choose those removed from the sphere of personal prejudice, active and passive. We can imagine how Sidney would conclude this chapter. He had just got to the implied or asserted covenant between nations and their rulers; the lucky chance of this part of the MS. being open for correction on his table, furnished his adversaries with proof, that he still considered failure in king-

The third, and by far the longest chapter, in its present state, though we wonder if it would not have been placed by its author before Chapter ii., had he revised or completed the work, refers to the rights of just magistrates, and especially treats of those of our English kings.

If kings were really fathers of their people, or excelled all others in virtue, Sidney could conceive that they ought to have absolute obedience; but there is no reason why it should be yielded, no precept for, and many examples against, giving any submission to a monarch which is not his due as a servant of the laws. Then, what should nations allow to their kings as this due? Sidney does not delight to speak of his own time, but he cannot help referring to the power of Louis with his vast revenues, and his impoverished subjects, who are, "in the best country in the world, and at a time when the Crown most flourishes, the poorest and most miserable of all the nations under the sun." A large revenue, too

ship a thing to be met with punishment, which they might not otherwise have had patience to look for. Some of the contemporary personal allusions in the chapters we have briefly reviewed would certainly have been sufficient to secure the condemning of the writer, for a (true) libel, if published; if they fell into the hands of Secretary Jenkins, the mention of his own name would dispose him to see, whether, though Sidney was arrested before Lord Howard had "informed," and when nothing had been found against him, there might not be something which could be invented, to connect him with an actionable offence. This is only a conjecture, to be taken for what it is worth. There is some circumstantial evidence in its favour, as may be seen by examining Sir Philip Lloyd's, Ducasse's, and Sidney's own narratives, and comparing them with Toland's statement.

large to be employed in proper wants and public service, is not desirable. This is not out of date for other nations, but it is, happily, for us. Sidney himself says: "We have a king who reigns by law," and though Austin (Augustine), Ambrose, and Tertullian speak of fearing an emperor, without detracting from their honour, they had no knowledge of what concerns us. Let kings "acknowledge themselves to be the servant of the public, and all men will be theirs." "I am unwilling," he goes on, "to advance a proposition which may seem harshly to tender ears; I am inclined to believe that the same rule which obliges us to yield obedience to the good magistrate, who is the minister of God, and assures us that in obeying him we obey God, does equally oblige us not to obey those who make themselves the ministers of the devil;" and "he that will suffer himself to be compelled, knows not how to die." "And whether the power be placed simply in one, a few, or many men, or in one body composed of the three simple species, it is all one."

"Laws are made to keep things in good order without recourse to force." "By this means every man knows whether he is safe or in danger; but if all depended on the will of a man, the worst would often be the safest, and the best in the greatest danger." Laws are the only restraint on monarchs. A council can do nothing if the king is absolute; if it has the power of acting independently, he is no monarch. As for oaths, "Mr. Hobbes was the first who ingeniously contrived a compendious way of justifying the most abominable perjuries." The

people gave power to the king, the king had all the power they had, and could absolve himself of his oath to them just as easily as they could, as a man is free from a promise made to another who releases him from it. Others held them as sacred, and coronation oaths mean that the king pledges himself to maintain the laws. We cannot call a man king till he is crowned ; that ceremony recognises the right he has to the throne, which, even on the natural claim of relationship to the deceased king, might be doubtful enough, as it has been in many cases. In England, the king himself could not alter the succession without an Act of Parliament enabling him to do so.

It is a pity that "in England the laws are so numerous, and the volumes of our statutes with the interpretations and adjudged cases be so vast, that hardly anything is so clear and fixed, but men of wit and learning may find what will serve for a pretence to justify almost any judgment they have a mind to give." But the spirit of the English law is good and true. The power to assert liberties and to make laws, ought to be given to "those from whom usurpations have least to be feared, who have been least subject to be awed, cheated, or corrupted, and who, having the greatest interest in the nation, were most concerned to preserve its power, liberty, and welfare."

In England, this power is placed with king and parliament, consisting of nobility, clergy, and commons. Magna Charta could give nothing to the people who in themselves had all, and only reduced into a small volume

the rights which the nation has resolved to maintain. As for the *name* of king, some absolute princes have not been called by it, such as the Cæsars, Caliphs, Sultans, Great Mogul, "the Czar of Muscovy, though he is as absolute a monarch, and his people as miserable slaves, as any in the world. On the other hand, the chief magistrates of Sweden, Denmark, England, etc., who could do nothing but by law, have been called kings. . . . Those who have lived in the highest exercise of their liberty, and have been most tenacious of it, have thought no honour too great for such magistrates as were eminent in the defence of their rights, and were set up for that end:" but still phrases of honour have a tendency to increase too quickly.* As to the kings *de facto*, the law which acknowledged them was simply one made for the convenience of the nations, not of the king.

What is rebellion? Renewal of war. A nation vindicating its own liberty does not rebel; nor, if it did, is rebellion always evil. Allegiance is *ad legem*. Rebellion, which Samuel compared to witchcraft, is not of a people against a prince, but of a prince against God. That it should be known that a nation may defend its own rights, "is not only necessary for its safety, but advantageous to such kings as are wise and good."

"Those constitutions which make the best pro-

* Sidney is human enough to avenge himself by a hit at his quondam friend: Titles ("your grace") which within the space of a hundred years were reserved for princes, have "of late been given to Monk, and to his honourable duchess." Contemporary history or gossip gives point to this remark, only worth noticing because it is personal.

vision against the greatest evils are most to be commended."

What then were the defects of the English constitution? Did it, after all, take care of the rights of the nation?

"I am not ignorant," says Sidney, "that many honest and good men, acknowledging these rights, and the care of our ancestors to preserve them, think they wanted wisdom rightly to proportionate the means to the end." This he does not agree with, though he draws a simile from military operations, and observes that the greatest general who ever lived in classical times, would certainly be beaten by any insignificant fellow with a small number of men, furnished with such arms as are now in use, and following the methods now practised. In the same way there are some natural changes in the nation. Sidney thinks the disorders in England, came from the Crown alienating or corrupting the nobility, because it had driven those who are truly noblemen, "into the same interest and name with the commons, and by that means increased a party which never was, and I think never can be, united to the court." *

"If we will be just to our ancestors, it will become us in our time rather to pursue what we know they intended, and by new constitutions to repair the breaches made upon the old, than to accuse them of

* We quote these words simply to show how untrue they are in the present, and that we may be grateful to one who has made the Sovereign's presence a bond of union for the whole nation.

the defect that will for ever attend the actions of men. Taking our affairs at the worst, we shall soon find that, if we have the same spirit they had, we may easily restore our nation to its ancient liberty, dignity, and happiness, and if we do not, the fault is owing to ourselves."

"If any among the kings have merited the glorious name of heads of nations, it must have been by their personal virtues, by a vigilant care of the good of their people, by an inseparable conjunction of interests with them, by an ardent love to every member of society, by a moderation of spirit affecting no undue superiority, or assuming any singular advantages which they are not willing to communicate to every part of the political body. . . . He who knows such honour to be peculiarly due to him, for being the best of kings, will never glory in that which may be common to him with the worst."

Then follow some very powerful words describing the king, who does no wrong, who cannot do any, cannot even pardon treason against himself, but is subject to the higher law of his being. The visible king might be pleased with the wrong-doing of his favourites, the King of England cannot, as Sidney thinks, set free those whom the nation has declared worthy of punishment. Nor has he any right to make proclamations. "The restrictions of the people's liberty must be from themselves or from none." What check is there on their delegates who represent them? "I believe the powers of every county, city, and borough in England, are regulated by the general law to which they have all consented, and by which they are all made members

of one political body. . . . It is not therefore for Kent or Sussex, Lewes or Maidstone, but for the whole nation, that the members chosen in those places are sent to serve in Parliament . . . The only punishment to which they are subject, if they betray their trust, is scorn, infamy, hatred, and an assurance of being rejected when they shall again seek the same honours. And though this may seem a small matter to those who fear to do ill only through a sense of the pains inflicted, yet it is terrible to men of ingenuous spirits, as they are supposed to be, who are accounted fit to be trusted with so great powers."

Sidney says: "The law which would oblige the electors to give particular orders to their knights and burgesses in relation to every vote, would make the decision of the most important affairs to depend upon the judgment of those who know nothing of the matters in question, and by that means cast the nation into the utmost danger of the most inextricable confusion."

However great the danger from Parliament influenced by corrupt motives—as that of the Restoration, the hazard of being ruined "by those who must perish with us, is not so much to be feared, as by one who may enrich himself by our destruction."

Sidney further shows that the king, in England, does not make the laws, but passes them; and though he did not like the idea of a queen, he always praises Elizabeth of England, and gives her the credit he thinks due to her. "She knew that she did not reign for herself, but for her people; that what was good for them was either

good for her, or that her good ought not to come into competition with that of the whole nation; and that she was, by oath, obliged to pass such laws as were presented to her on their behalf. . . . And if we examine our history, we shall find that every good and generous prince has sought to establish our liberties, as much as the most base and wicked to infringe them."

Such, then, are Sidney's "visionary schemes," his "impracticable views," and his "blind hatred of everything called by a kingly name." Without partiality, we have tried to sketch in a modern fashion, and in the light of our own times, the character and ideals of Algernon Sidney. We fully acknowledge his defects. He had a noble mind and a "bad manner;" he had great theories, and did not always see what was practicable, so well as he could observe what was not, and was often impatient with the blindness and sloth of those around him; he was most affectionate, and thoroughly kind-hearted, but not seldom appeared unsociable, "being terribly in earnest;" he was truly religious in his own, but only in his own, fashion.

It is strangely true to Nature that the sacrifice which cost him least—that of his life—has won more admiration for him, and kept his name greener in English history, than all his toil; and that, fitted as he was to be a servant of his country, the only patriotic work required of him was that of being a victim of sufficient worth, moral and social, to draw attention to the tyranny which required its sacrifice.

His truth "passed for treason" then, but are not his treasons accepted as truths now? Doubtless there are many "morals" in the circumstances of Sidney's public life, to be drawn therefrom by those who serve England in any capacity; but quite as many points of example are found in the conduct of one who, with many faults of temper and placed among many temptations, was "never guilty of meanness in his life."

> The greatest gift a hero leaves his race
> Is to have been a hero. Say we fail?
> We feed the high tradition of the world,
> And leave our spirit in our children's breasts.

And that is why the story of the life of Algernon Sidney has now been retold.

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